

Oncology News



....*More than medicine*

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Thomas P. Trezona, M.D., F.A.C.S.

(541) 302-6469

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Dry January: Cutting the Booze Helps Reduce Risk of Cancer

By Diana M. Seaders, PA-C

2013 marked a record low for amount of rainfall in Eugene and other parts in Oregon, making it the most arid year yet. But that's not all that's dry. Now that the holidays are over and 2014 is here, thousands of people are taking part in a British tradition simply known as "Dry January," where the challenge is to abstain from alcohol for 31 days in the name of better health. Are they taking things a little too far? Maybe not.

Extensive literature demonstrates excess alcohol consumption increases the risk of multiple cancers. But how much is too much? The numbers vary from study to study, but the pattern is clear: there is a direct correlation between intake and risk. Male patients are at a considerably increased risk if

they are drinking more than fifteen drinks a week on average, and women,



more than eight. However, even light alcohol consumption of *one drink per day* has been associated with a small increased risk for breast cancer in women.

NPR recently published an article stating the subject of alcohol between patient and provider unfortunately does not regularly come up during a medical visit. NPR went on to say research shows that having a

conversation and making a measurable plan can cut a person's alcohol consumption by up to 25%! Therefore, a worthwhile New Year's resolution might be to take an extra minute to ask your patients about their alcohol intake. While perhaps they may not go for the "Dry January" method, you certainly might convince them to reduce their intake amount and help them reduce their risk of cancer.

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CASCADE
SURGICAL ONCOLOGY, PC

3783 International Court, Suite 200
Springfield, OR 97477