"The Fountain of Youth"

By Jennifer Jordan of savoreachglass.com

Though the Fountain of Youth hasn't provided us with life extension - its waters have yet to be packaged, labeled, and displayed in the vitamin aisles of the local market - there is something that may serve as a close second: red wine.

Red Wine Slows Down Aging

Most of us are aware of the health benefits of red wine. From lowering blood pressure to helping cardiovascular health, red wine is giving all sorts of diseases something to whine about. However, recent discovery has led scientists to believe that, in addition to increasing health, the consumption of red wine may single handedly decrease the mortality rate and slow the aging process: belly up to the bar and order a Merlot, with an added dash of lifespan.

Calorie Restriction

There are a lot of things that a person can do to increase the years they will live. From lowering cholesterol to working out on a daily basis, several practices work together to give the average person more years of living. Yet, nothing increases a human's lifespan quite like the act of calorie restriction, limiting caloric intake to a minimum. Some researchers estimate that calorie restriction can increase lifespan by as many as 50 years.

However, from Alfredo sauce to zucchini bread, our world is a world that loves to eat. Because of this, restricting calories isnt very feasible; we have a better chance at actually finding the Fountain of Youth than we do of not consuming the T-bone steak sitting on the dinner table, begging us to stick a fork in it.

Taking into consideration the fact that humans aren't likely to engage in caloric limitations, scientists began looking for a way that people could have their cake, and literally eat it too.

The Sirtuin1 Gene

Calorie restriction activates the Sirtuin 1 Gene, a gene that is known to heavily influence the continued existence in all living cells. Once this gene is activated, cells go into survival mode, putting more effort into longevity. This ultimately - as cells fight harder to stay alive - increases lifespan.

However, calorie restriction, as scientists have discovered, is not the only thing that can activate the Sirtuin1 Gene. Recent studies have found that red wine also possesses this talent. Due to the fact that red wine contains Resveratrol, a class of antibiotics produced by plants that activates the Sirtuin1 Gene,

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drinking it can add years to life. With each glass of red wine consumed, a cells urge to exist becomes stronger, the body is filled with antioxidants, and Gloria Gaynor's "I will Survive" is heard, reverberating off the strands of DNA.

The Data Speaks

After discovering that Resveratrol lengthened the life of fruit flies and roundworms, Dr. David Sinclair and a team of Harvard researchers began to see if Resveratrol had the same affect on mice. While the concept of giving a red wine molecule to a group of mice may seem odd - leaving the mice inebriated and surrounded by relatives begging them not to get behind the wheel of cheese - the study actually drew conclusions that could leave Dr. Sinclair and his team sitting next to Jonas Salk on the spectrum of important scientific discoveries.

The researchers found, after a 110 week study of mice placed on a high fat diet, that the mice who took Resveratrol lived longer than the mice who did not. Despite ingesting foods that were high in fat, the mice who took Resveratrol had a mortality rate of 32 percent, while the mice who didnt take Resveratrol had a mortality rate of 50 percent.

The reasons for this, the researchers concluded, is that Resveratrol essentially copies calorie restriction, giving those who ingest it the same benefits of those who restrict their food intake. In sum, Resveratrol ignites the will to survive in the cells, rewarding the person who ingests it with a longer life.

Could it be the same in people?

While mice - living an average of 2 years - were an ideal subject matter for the Resveratrol study, testing in people, because our lifespan is about 40 times that of a mouse, is not as convenient. Therefore, human testing has yet to be done. However, it is highly theorized that a Resveratrol study would find a similar outcome, whether the test is performed on mice or men. The main reason for this prediction is the French.

The French are a culture bent on poor eating - consuming foods high in fat and calories - and inactivity. Despite having a lifestyle that serves as a manual for a heart attack, heart disease is not an enemy of France. The majority of the French simply do not get heart disease. The reason for this is because they are a culture that consumes a lot of red wine.

This red wine has proven to be the one variable that seems to enable them to sidestep death, allowing them, despites some vices, to live a great deal of years.

In fact, in areas of France where wine is grown, citizens live 35 to 65 percent longer than citizens residing in a non-growing district.

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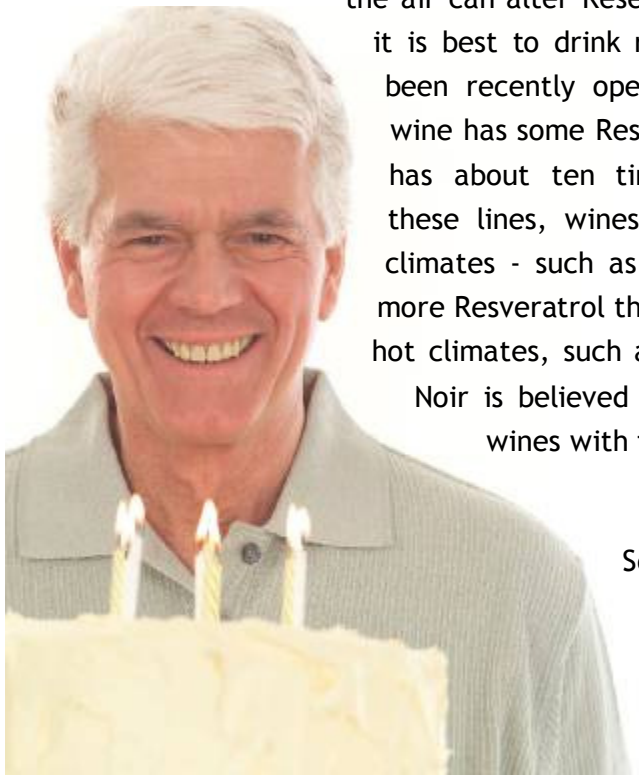
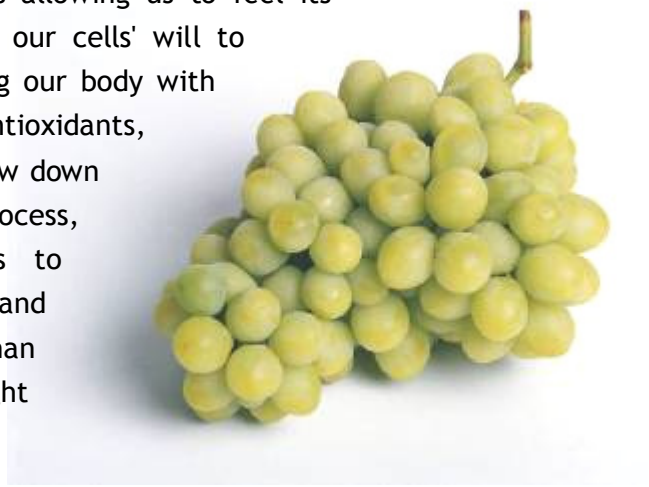
How much red wine should people drink?

While this Fountain of Youth discovery is great news for wine lovers, it has the potential to perpetuate the wrong idea, with some people locking themselves in a liquor store, grabbing a corkscrew, and drinking all the wine on the shelves in a quest to live forever. Like all of the benefits of red wine, the key is moderation.

Right now, it is recommended that people hoping to consume Resveratrol drink one or two glasses of red wine a day. Because the air can alter Reservatrol's potency, it is best to drink red wine that has been recently opened. While white wine has some Resveratrol, red wine has about ten times more. Along these lines, wines grown in cooler climates - such as New York - have more Resveratrol than wines grown in hot climates, such as Australia. Pinot Noir is believed to be among the wines with the highest levels.



So while the Fountain of Youth may not have technically been found, this red wine discovery is allowing us to feel its mist. By igniting our cells' will to survive and filling our body with life preserving antioxidants, red wine may slow down the aging process, allowing humans to stay younger and live longer than they ever thought possible.



 Jennifer is the senior editor at http://www.savoreachglass.com. With a vast knowledge of wine etiquette, she writes articles on everything from how to hold a glass of wine to how to hold your hair back after too many glasses. Ultimately, she writes her articles with the intention that readers will remember wine is fun and each glass of anything fun should always be savored.