

- Drinking of alcoholic beverages / Brain diseases

## Brain at risk of alcohol

Herald Sun · 24 Jun 2025 · 13 · Eleanor Wicklund

A new study published in the journal *Neurology* has found that drinking alcohol, even in relatively moderate amounts, significantly increases the risk of dementia and other serious health conditions.



Caitlyn Devlin and Christopher Palfrey with their 17-month-old triplets Dorothy, Adeleine and Margot in training for the Mighty Trek Challenge. Picture: David Caird

The research, conducted in Brazil, analysed data from autopsies of 1781 people, shedding light on the long-term effects of alcohol on brain health.

Subjects were grouped into four categories – those who never drank, moderate drinkers (up to seven standard drinks per week), heavy drinkers (eight or more standard drinks per week), and former heavy drinkers who had not drunk for at least three months, but had a history of heavy drinking.

A standard drink was defined as 14 grams of alcohol, roughly equivalent to a 350ml glass of beer or 147ml of wine.

Those who consumed up to seven or more than eight drinks per week faced a higher risk of brain injuries associated with memory loss and dementia.

Heavy drinkers had a 133 per cent higher risk of developing hyaline arteriolosclerosis, which restricts blood flow to the brain and can result in tiny, often unnoticed strokes that damage memory and increase the risk of dementia.

Former heavy drinkers were still 89 per cent more likely to develop this condition.

Moderate drinkers had a 60 per cent increased risk, proving even lower levels of alcohol consumption were harmful.