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Health newsfeed for Friday, December 2, 2011

HEADLINE: ALCOHOL AND BREAST CANCER

ANCHOR LEAD: IF BREAST CANCER WORRIES YOU, YOU SHOULD PROBABLY STOP DRINKING, ELIZABETH TRACEY REPORTS

Even low to moderate alcohol consumption over a lifetime can increase a woman's risk of breast cancer, data from the Nurse's Health Study reveal. Ben Park, a breast cancer expert at Johns Hopkins, explains the findings.

PARK: Studies that have been done heretofore have really been consistent and I think that yes, perhaps unfortunately, that alcohol does increase the risk of getting breast cancer in women, but, and this is a very big caveat, it's not that big. If you look at the actual data that they did in this particular study, which is looking at the Nurse's Health Study, one of the largest cohorts of women that we have, the incidence of breast cancer in women who drank moderately or even really infrequently was really really small. :29

Park says women who consume judicious amounts of alcohol can weigh breast cancer risk against the risk of heart disease, which alcohol is known to moderate. At Johns Hopkins, I'm Elizabeth Tracey.