

## - Alcoholism / Drinking of alcoholic beverages

# Binge drinking can hasten ageing

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FINDINGS by the Research Society on Alcoholism suggest that the more people drink, the older their cells get. “Our study showed that alcoholic patients have a shortened telomere length, which means that heavy drinking causes biological ageing at a cellular level,” said Dr Naruhisa Yamaki, a clinical fellow at Japan’s Kobe University Graduate School of Medicine.

There is no safe level for alcohol use, according to scientific evidence. Moreover, binge drinking is especially harmful. It also has adverse effects on your overall health such as developing an addiction.

The World Health Organization estimates that every 10 seconds someone dies due to alcohol. In South Africa, there have been recent reports of alcohol-related fatalities.

In one, a young man lost his life as a result of a drinking game.

Excessive drinking can increase your risk of serious health problems, including cardiovascular impairments. Dehydration can cause your skin to lose elasticity and moisture, which can cause sagging, dryness and wrinkles. In other words, drinking alcohol can age you. Furthermore, the likelihood of dehydration increases with age. Antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E and carotenoids, may help protect cells from damage caused by oxidative stress. And oxidative stress can cause DNA damage that accelerates the ageing process.

Antioxidants are compounds that can stop or delay the cell damage caused by free radicals. The best sources of antioxidants are plantbased foods, especially fruits and vegetables.

Try including the following foods in your diet to get antioxidants:

Dairy products, eggs and liver are rich in vitamin A.

Most fruits and vegetables, especially berries, oranges and bell peppers, are high in vitamin C.

Vitamin E is found in nuts and seeds, sunflower and other vegetable oils, and green, leafy vegetables.

Carrots, peas, spinach and mangoes are high in betacarotene.