Welcome to the **NEW** QL News!

The Queen’s Landing Communication Committee has been working hard to collect and provide our neighbors important and interesting information. We have expanded the range of interests that will include events around Kent Island and surrounding areas. For example, did you know the Kent Island High School Drama Club added a new Haunted House to this year’s Kent Island Fall Festival at Camp Wright in Stevensville to be held on October 27th or that the Queen Anne’s Soccer Club opened the fall season on September 26th?

A photo essay section has been included which will feature photographs highlighting scenes from around the community. For this issue, “A Child’s View of Queen’s Landing” (see pages 11-12), features photos taken by children. Next issue we’ll be featuring Queen’s Landing’s non-human family members. Grab your camera and submit your best pet photo. We added a science page (“Have You Ever Wondered”) where residents can contribute essays that describe in lay terms some subject or topic of which they are expert or have great interest in to share with the community. The subject in this issue is life expectancy. We also plan to continue soliciting recipe submissions so get your favorite recipes ready for us all to enjoy! Our “Meet Your Queen’s Landing Neighbor” section will continue providing opportunities to get to know some of the many very special and interesting people who also live in Queen’s Landing a little better.

The QL Communication Committee, led by Bob Young, includes Elizabeth Arias, Patti Darling, and Karla Milanette. Thanks to outgoing member Kristin Young for her outstanding contributions to get us to this point.

Our intent is to pass along the type of information that brings a community closer together. You will not be seeing typical Board business in this newsletter. There will be separate communications for the Board President’s and other Committee’s reports. The new format will be positive, broad, informative and, hopefully, exciting. Whether you own or rent your home in Queen’s Landing, this newsletter is for you.

We are asking for your suggestions for a new name for the newsletter; something catchy and clearly depicting our intent for a top-shelf newsletter as an avenue to spread information and showcase Queen’s Landing as a great place to call home. So please submit your suggestions for a name of our new newsletter to Bob Young (BobYoung@queenslanding.org). The committee will circulate the suggestions for further comment. We will keep you updated!

We hope you enjoy your new Newsletter.

—*The QL Communication Committee*

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**MEET KATHLEEN SLEVIN:**

- Queen’s Landing homeowner for 14 years
- Flight Attendant
- Mom
- Grandmother
- Friend
- Now Pickleball Guru

If you can corral Kathleen long enough to stay still and chat she’ll tell you.......in the words her mother told her so many years ago, **KEEP MOVING**!

Kathleen’s new love in life is Pickleball. Kathleen first found the game while visiting The Villages in Florida earlier this year. She was hooked instantaneously. When she came home she researched availability in this area and found indoor courts in Eastport – Annapolis. Recognizing its health benefits overall, she immediately began campaigning for the Queen’s Landing tennis courts to become multi-purpose by adding lines designated for the game of Pickleball.

(continued)

**Queen’s Landing Has New Board Members**

The Queen’s Landing Council of Unit Owners cast their votes by secret ballot at their annual meeting on October 10. Congratulations to new Directors Bob Young and Stan Ruddie, elected to serve three-year-terms, Bob Bradford, re-elected for another three-year term, and Bob Lever elected to a one-year-term, filling a vacancy. These four gentlemen all have impressive backgrounds and bring expertise in areas the community needs to lead us through the challenges ahead.

The Queen’s Landing community is grateful for the dedication and hard work of outgoing Board members Marc Bergsman, Stan Feinblum, and Sharon Barbera and thanks them for their leadership. They will be recognized for their service at the next meeting of the Board on November 17.
Although Kathleen’s initial attempt to modify our tennis courts was met with a slightly unenthusiastic response, in her typical never-give-up style she continued to lobby support for her new love. As most of us know, we now have our tennis courts painted to accommodate both games—tennis and Pickleball. Her enthusiasm is simply infectious. Last Saturday Kathleen organized a Pickleball Clinic over at Bayside where the addiction is spreading rapidly thanks to her efforts.

For those who don’t know the game, Pickleball is a cross between badminton and ping pong played on a court smaller that a tennis court. The net is slightly lower and the players stand closer to the net in Pickleball than in tennis. The ball is a plastic wiffle-type ball and players use a solid paddle made of wood or composite materials.

The name ‘Pickleball’ is attributed to dog “Pickles’ who kept running after the ball as the game was being invented by two U.S. Congressman in Washington State 40 years ago in an attempt to combat their kids’ boredom during the summer. The popularity of the game has recently picked up steam as it can be played by all ages and is easy for everyone to learn since it is for all skill levels.

There is not a lot of equipment necessary for the game. A paddle and balls are required and can be purchased fairly inexpensively online or at some sporting goods stores. Proper attire is recommended to avoid injury – casual, comfortable clothing and appropriate court shoes/sneakers will help prevent falls. Kathleen constantly reminds players that we are not playing professional Pickleball here; that we are playing for fun so don’t run after the ball, don’t dive for the ball, and no back-peddling. Play safely! She offers borrowed equipment for the first time ‘pickleballers’ and encourages everyone to come out and join the fun.

In her world of travel, these days Kathleen always has her Flight Attendant bag ready to go at all times. She maintains a sometimes challenging work schedule but appreciates the opportunities she’s had visiting places all over the world such as Dubai despite having to endure those inevitable flight delays we all cherish. One thing that has changed in her travel routine in recent times is that her flight bag now includes space for her Pickleball paddle and a few balls. My guess is if you ask, Kathleen could probably tell you where the best Pickleball courts are anywhere between Washington DC to Hong Kong and beyond.

When not up there over the rainbow or on the courts, you can find Kathleen involved in one of the following daily activities: riding her new bike (her favorite was recently stolen), working out on the elliptical at the clubhouse, playing Mah Jongg or Bridge, playing golf with her grandson, volunteering at the library or the food pantry and just overall enjoying life to the fullest. Thanks to Kathleen and others in the Community along with Management who have helped get the game organized, you can stop by our tennis courts anytime there is a scheduled play and you will find anywhere from 2 to 20 people ready to play the game. Meet your neighbor, Kathleen, who is very willing to share her knowledge and love for the game. Having been a teacher and realtor in her former life, ‘teaching’ Pickleball has come naturally to her. She is thrilled with how the Community has come to share her interest for Pickleball and as a result has increased the number of scheduled plays due to its popularity: Tuesdays at 5:30 pm and Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 8:30am.

If you have any questions, Kathleen says you can email her at kslev88@gmail.com. In my experience, just trying to pin her down long enough for this interview, email might be the best way to reach her. Otherwise get your running shoes on and write fast.

—Submitted by Patti Darling
Landscape Beautification at Queen’s Landing

The Landscape Committee is small, only three volunteers at present. Even though we are small we are busy moving forward to beautify and maintain the grounds at Queens Landing. Earlier in the summer one of our volunteers donated and applied 3 gallons of Shake & Feed brand rose food to a number of the rose bushes in the common areas. Perhaps you have noticed the lovely blooms on the roses in back of Building 15 along the walking path near the Chester River?

A volunteer donated and installed a flower bed around the electrical boxes between buildings 32 and 34 on the Chester River. After hours of removing sod, digging, amending the soil and planting new perennials, the following garden was established. It contains Daisies, white Cone-flowers, Black-Eyed Susans, and white Vincas.

After the CUO took over two abandoned units in preparation for turning them into rental and income producing properties, a landscape volunteer donated new plants and recycled perennials from her own garden for use at 3H. See before and after photos below.

The Landscape Committee has also been given permission by the Board to establish and maintain a perennial garden behind the maintenance shed for transplanted plants to be stored and later used by residents when renovations have taken away gardens due to scaffolding being installed. The garden behind the maintenance shed will be maintained by the Landscape Committee. However, under the direction of the Landscape Committee, it will be the responsibility of a unit owner to dig up and transplant perennials back to their properties. A homeowner may, through coordination with the Landscape Committee, hire CS Lawn or another landscape contractor to remove plants and install them at their residence.

Finally, the Landscape Committee wants to remind homeowners to be aware of their dog’s “intentions” when walking around flower gardens. Pet urine kills flowers. The garden that was installed around the electrical boxes between building 32 and 34 lost several new flowers because dogs, not realizing they were doing this, were allowed to urinate on flowers. This is like pouring ammonia on a new plant. We would appreciate your help in directing your dogs to “go” in areas that do not have plantings. We, and all the lovely flowers, thank you in advance for your cooperation.

It has been a busy summer season and despite the hard work we do, we try to have some fun at the same time. If you are interested in being part of our committee, please contact Barbara Trower at Barbara@queenslanding.org

See you around the neighborhood!

—Submitted by Margery Bergsman

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Dryer Vent Safety: Learn Not to Burn

With the upcoming dryer vent inspection, there’s been a lot of discussion about dryer vents clogging up. Where I used to live, my dryer was in the basement with an exposed run, so I could move the dryer, take the duct apart, check and clean the entire duct and put everything back in about 15 minutes. This is not the case in my QL condo, with its long, inaccessible duct. However, since clogged dryer ducts cost the homeowner extra money and can cause fires, it’s important to know when a clog is forming.

With regard to the safety issue, when a dryer duct starts to plug up, lint builds up in the duct near the dryer. Many people think that dryer duct fires are caused by the dryer’s heater continuing to put out heat with the duct plugged off, raising the temperature in the duct. Since the auto-ignition temperature (the temperature at which a substance ignites from high temperature alone) of lint is 880°F\(^1\), it is much more likely that ignition is caused by lint that has built up in the duct at the back of the dryer, or in the dryer itself, coming into contact with the heating element, a spark from the motor, or a static electricity spark from synthetic fabrics. If there is only a trace amount of lint present, it just burns up without propagating any flame. But with a large amount of lint in the vicinity, a little bit of lint igniting can start a sustained fire.

If a plastic duct gets plugged and the lint catches fire, the flame can burn through the plastic and spread to combustible material a significant distance away.

Even if you have an all metal duct, if the lint inside catches fire, the duct can get hot enough to ignite adjacent combustible material.

In addition to the safety issue, a clogged duct increases the cost of drying a load of clothes. The two main factors that determine clothes drying time are (1) temperature and (2) air flow; with air flow being the dominant factor by far.

When it comes to saving electricity, assuming that on average a dryer draws 5.3 kilowatts\(^2\) of electricity, with electricity costing us 13.2 cents per kWh, every additional 10 minutes a dryer runs costs 11 cents. If you do four loads a week, and each load is taking an extra half-hour, that comes to $69/year.

Because I can’t take my dryer vent apart, I found an informative web page on Angie’s List: http://www.angieslist.com/cleaning/dryer-vent-cleaning.htm. Check it out. It has a good list of suggestions on how to check for and prevent lint build-up.

In addition to the Angie’s List suggestions, here are some further observations and recommendations:

When you know you have a clean duct, note how long it takes to dry different types of laundry, how much the vent damper opens and how much lint appears on the vent outlet (digital photos are recommended), so months later you’ll have something to compare.

On dryers with a permanent press setting, there’s a cool-down period at the end of the cycle. To check whether the clothes seem unusually hot to the touch, it’s best to check a load of towels done on a regular setting.

Thirty-five to 40 minutes to dry may be a little too general to apply to loads of lighter fabrics.\(^2\) Therefore, it’s best to note the drying time when you know you have a clear duct and use that as a reference.

If you have a bird screen over the outside vent, in addition to checking that the flapper is opening completely, clean off any lint that accumulates on the screen wires.

When you pull out the lint filter, look around inside the dryer in the pocket where it sat — if you see more loose lint there, take it out (you can use your hand, a brush, or a vacuum).

A little time and attention can save you money, save your clothes and keep you and your neighbors safe.

References

—Submitted by Rich Reiter
Free Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Day—November 8

The Maryland Environmental Service will be offering a household hazardous waste collection day and electronics and latex paint recycling day for Midshore residents on Saturday, November 8, 2014 at the Midshore Facility, Barkers Landing Road in Easton from 8 am to 2 pm, rain or shine. The service is limited to Midshore residents (Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties). There is no charge to Midshore residents for these services.

Acceptable household hazardous waste items include:

- Gas, gas/oil mixes and automotive fuels
- Acids, cleaners, and solvents
- Chemicals (pool, darkroom, etc.)
- Pesticides, insecticides and herbicides
- Oil based paint, paint thinner, stains, turpentine, wood preservatives and wood strippers
- Fluorescent tubes and lamps
- Mercury thermometers

Usable latex paint will be accepted for recycling. Do not bring unusable latex paint to the event. Instead, solidify the paint with an absorbent such as kitty litter, dirt or mulch and dispose of the paint in regular trash.

Acceptable electronics include:

- Computers and peripherals (keyboards, laptops, monitors, mice, printers, cables, modems, etc.)
- TVs, remotes, VCR, CD and DVD players
- CB radios, fax machines, answering machines and copiers

Items NOT accepted are:

- Household trash
- Explosives and ammunition
- Medical and radioactive wastes
- Compressed gas cylinders
- Asbestos
- Smoke detectors
- Business, industrial and commercial farm wastes
- Appliances
- Power tools
- Tires
- Household batteries
- Road/marine flares

The next free recycling event in 2015 will be on Saturday, April 18, 2015, at the Nicholson Drop-Off Center, 23750 Larney Nick Road in Chestertown.

For questions on the program, please contact the Maryland Environmental Service at 1-800-I-RECYCLE (1-800-473-2925).

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SUZI’S CHILLED GAZPACHO SOUP

Made from fresh summer veges and nonfat sour cream (the secret).

1 large peeled cucumber, 2 t salt
chopped
2 T vinegar
1 green pepper, chopped
1 onion or sliced spring
1/2–3/4 cup nonfat sour
onions
cream
Juice one lemon
Paprika
2 large tomatoes
Small can stewed tomatoes
5 T salad oil
1 egg yolk
5 garlic cloves

Place all ingredients into food processor or blender, blend until chunky, not creamy. If needed, add more canned stewed tomatoes to thin. Chill thoroughly and serve in bowls with diced tomatoes and floating thin/sliced cucumbers and sprig of parsley. Whole peppercorns give it a zing!!

Hint: To peel garlic cloves easily. Put them in a bowl, top with another bowl and shake vigorously. The skins will fall off!!
The following article came from a Fraud Protection Kit produced by Home Instead Senior Care. Although the primary focus was to educate the senior population since they are the most victimized by fraud as currently reported, the scam protection advice is equally useful to us personally or with regard to our loved ones. The information has been condensed for our Newsletter but the complete packet is available from any Home Instead Senior Care office or visit www.ProtectSeniorsFromFraud.com.

TOP SCAMS

• Telemarketing That Includes Internet, Phone and Mail: Scammers might send out an email on bank letterhead and say there is a problem with the account that requires either a confirmation of personal information or an update of account information. Without realizing it, you end up giving them full access to your account by providing personal account information.

• Fake Charities: You receive a call from a charity saying they are supporting a reputable organization and ask that you make a donation. What they don’t tell you is that they are not authorized to be fundraising and as little as 3% will go to the organization while 97% may stay in the scammer’s pocket.

• Sweepstakes: Many times people will get an official-looking check stating they are a winner. The account number is fraudulent but the routing number is correct. The instructions are to cash the check and simply send in a processing fee – sometimes up to $5,000 (five thousand dollars) but keep the rest as the grand prize. The bank reads the check as valid BUT 15 days later the check bounces while you remain liable for that $5,000. Sometimes the lucky check even comes with an official-looking IRS notification of late fees that you owe as a result of your ‘winnings’.

• Health-Care Fraud: There can be misuse of a person’s medical card. Scammers can find out a person is diabetic for example, and place a call offering to send supplies through the mail. Just give up your medical card information along with a credit card. Scammers also can assume another person’s identity and obtain free treatment for themselves. A Medicare Card has the holder’s Social Security number on it and should be kept in a secure location at all times. We all know the damage that can be done if your Social Security number falls into the wrong hands.

• Identity Theft: Once again this can begin with a phone call or email saying there is a need to verify your account information. Even with only the last 4 digits of your Social Security number, scammers can match that with your phone number, last place of employment and home address. Once they have that information they can apply for a loan, open a credit card, open an account at department stores or even get a line of credit all in YOUR name. You get the bill and they get the goods.

• Financial Exploitation, Including Online Investment and Securities Fraud: Scammers will sell long term securities or stock. They have no problem selling someone in their 80s a certificate that doesn’t mature for 20 or 25 years. They simply rely on the person’s inability to understand the fine print. If the money is needed before it matures, the bond is broken and you are responsible to pay the penalties while the scammer gets a commission.

SCAM PROOFING CHECKLIST

✔ Shred documents that could be useful to criminals and potential scammers. These include: bank statements, credit card statements or offers and other financial information.

✔ Check with the Better Business Bureau before donating to or inviting a representative from a Charity organization into your home.

✔ Add your home and cell phone numbers to the Do Not Call Registry – www.donotcall.gov or call 1-888-382-1222. You must call from the number you want to register.

✔ Do not give out personal information in a phone call that you did not initiate.

✔ Never respond to a sweepstakes letter by sending a check to claim a prize.

✔ Don’t respond to requests to send a ‘deposit’ to ‘get started’ with a work-at-home offer or a pyramid scheme.

✔ Post a ‘No Solicitation’ notice on your front door.

✔ Watch for phishing tactics – scammers are VERY clever and well-informed.

✔ Do not leave bill payment envelopes in an unsecured mailbox for pickup.

✔ If you are getting unnecessary mail, contact the sender and ask to have your name removed from the mailing list. To cut down on the volume of unwanted bulk mail, get off as many national mailing lists as possible. Register at the Direct Marketing Association’s Mail Preference Service at www.dmacchoice.org. If you should continue to get mail that is obviously a scam, take it to your local post office and it will be forwarded to the U.S. Postal Inspector.

✔ Pay particular attention to your older family members, neighbors and friends who are the most vulnerable to scammers. Sometimes all it takes is someone stepping up to offer companionship which eventually leads to being taken advantage of leaving the victim feeling embarrassed and ashamed to acknowledge what has happened.

—Submitted by Patti Darling
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HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED

what the term “life expectancy” means exactly? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that life expectancy in the United States was 81.1 years for females and 76.3 years for males in 2011, the most recent year for which the measure is available.1 Does the figure 81.1 mean that all American women will live until they are 81.1 years old? We know there is quite a number of women who make it to 100 years and others who sadly do not complete their first year of life so that cannot be right. The answer is found in a really neat tool developed to describe the mortality experience of a population. It is what demographers refer to as the “period life table.”

The period life table provides comprehensive information about a population’s mortality experience at different ages, including the probability of dying, the number dying and surviving, and the average number of years remaining to be lived by those who survive to a given age. The basis of the life table is the probability of dying by age. All other elements are derived from it. The probability of dying, in turn, is estimated from the age-specific death rate. An age-specific death rate is simply the number of people dying in a given age and time (or period) divided by the number of people alive in that same age and time.2

The life expectancy estimates reported by the CDC were estimated using the period life table. First, death rates pertaining to the actual United States population in 2011 were calculated by dividing the number of deaths at each age by the number of people alive at mid-year in the same age category. The death counts come from the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS). The NVSS is a collaborative agreement between the CDC and each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.3 Each time a death occurs a death certificate must be filed with a state’s vital statistics office in order to legally dispose of the decedent’s remains. The state vital statistics registrar transmits all the information on the death certificate to the CDC. The mid-year population counts are produced by the US Census Bureau.

Second, the age-specific death rates were converted to age-specific probabilities of dying through a simple mathematical formula. Third, the probabilities of dying were applied to a hypothetical group of infants (100,000) beginning with ages 0 to 1 and continuing with each successive age until the last age category. Finally, from the age-specific probabilities of dying all other life table functions were derived, including the expectation of life. Therefore, the exact meaning of a life expectancy of 81.1 years for females in 2011 is that if the 100,000 hypothetical female babies born in 2011 were to experience throughout their entire lives the age-specific death rates observed for the actual female population in 2011, their life expectancy at birth would be 81.1 years on average. Since the functions of the life table are estimated by detailed age we can see what the life expectancy is for those surviving to specified ages. For example, in 2011 life expectancy for females age 65 was 20.3 years. This means that those out of the original 100,000 who survived to age 65 could expect to live on average an additional 20.3 years for a total life expectancy of 85.3 years. Likewise, those who survived to age 85 could expect to live an additional 6.9 years for a total life expectancy of 91.9 years. And, females who survived to age 100 could expect to live another 2.3 years for a total life expectancy of 102.3 years!3

Basically, as age increases those who survive each successive age tend to be the most resilient.

In closing, I leave you with a picture of an extraordinary development. Thanks to the period life table and to the development of the United States Vital Statistics System, we have been able to quantify one of the greatest developments in human history, the unprecedented increase in human longevity in just over a century. In 1900, life expectancy at birth for American females was 48.3 years. It was 46.3 years for American males. In a span of only 111 years, life expectancy at birth increased by 32.8 years for females and 30.0 years for males.2

NOTES

1. For life expectancy estimates by sex and age in 2011 see Table 7 in: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr63/nvsr63_03.pdf.
3. See the following webpage for information about the US NVSS and mortality data: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/deaths.htm.

—Submitted by Elizabeth Arias
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A Child’s View of Queen’s Landing

Queen's Landing is a beautiful and relaxing retreat for many of us adults who are lucky enough to live here. But when you are five and seven, it can be a magical and wondrous place. Jackson and Kelsie took a walk around the neighborhood with a camera. They would like to share some pictures of what they found on their journey.

What did you see on your latest walk around the neighborhood?
A Child's View of Queen's Landing (continued)
To drink or not to drink? That is the question .......... However, it’s a question not easily answered, at least when it comes to our health.

Although we’ve heard for years that moderate drinking is good for our hearts, several recent studies have questioned that long-held belief. And earlier this year, the World Health Organization issued a dire warning about cancer and alcohol. No amount of alcohol is safe, the report said.

So, if any alcohol raises our cancer risk, and if it might not offer a real benefit to our hearts, should we be drinking at all?

Cardiologist Michael Shapiro, DO, is not convinced that any amount of alcohol is good for us.

“It’s a common perception that alcohol, and red wine in particular, is helpful for the heart, but that perception is not based on any particularly good evidence,” Shapiro says. “If there is any benefit from alcohol -- and that’s not entirely clear -- it’s probably modest.”

Shapiro, who practices at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, says that much of the research touting alcohol’s heart health benefits doesn’t show cause and effect. Does alcohol itself protect against heart attacks, or does the lower risk stem from some other factor or combination of factors? It’s not known.

“People who drink moderately also may have certain socio-economic factors and behavior patterns that promote health, and we’ve never been able to tease that out,” he says.

A recent *BMJ* review of more than 50 studies on alcohol and heart health supports Shapiro’s view. Researchers found that people with a form of a gene tied to lower levels of drinking had healthier hearts. That suggests that cutting down on drinking -- even for light or moderate drinkers -- benefits the heart.

Another recent study found that people who have as little as one or two drinks of wine or liquor may raise their odds of atrial fibrillation, a potentially dangerous form of irregular heartbeat.

**BRIGHT SIDE TO ‘HEALTHY’ DRINKING?**

Like Shapiro, geriatrician Alison Moore, MD, MPH, is skeptical of studies about light to moderate drinking that tout health benefits but don’t show cause and effect. But she says research has shown that this amount of drinking may play a positive role in numerous conditions, from heart health to diabetes to dementia.

Recent studies continue to support alcohol’s benefits. In June, the authors of a study in the journal *Circulation* reported that men and women who have four to six alcoholic drinks (i.e. 5-ounce glasses of wine or 1.5-ounce cocktails) per week were, respectively, 20% and 44% less likely to develop a potentially fatal ballooning of the aorta.

And in April, early findings presented at a meeting of the National Kidney Foundation suggested that a little wine a day lowers the risk of chronic kidney disease. People who drank

(continued)
less than one glass of wine per day had a 37% lower risk than those who drank no wine at all.

“The data is convincing that truly moderate alcohol [drinking] does offer many health benefits,” says Moore, a professor of medicine and psychiatry at UCLA’s David Geffen School of Medicine. She researches alcohol’s effects on older groups of people. “For your average healthy person, it is not a bad thing.”

There's less debate among researchers about the role alcohol plays in cancer risk. The WHO declared alcohol a carcinogen in 1988, and U.S. government health agencies have reached the same conclusion.

Alcohol is known to cause several types of cancer, including cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, colon-rectum, liver, and female breast. According to the National Cancer Institute, the more you drink, the greater your risk of these types of cancer. For example, people who have three and a half or more drinks a day double or even triple their odds of head and neck cancers.

For two cancers, though -- renal cell, or kidney, cancer and non-Hodgkin lymphoma -- studies have shown that drinking can result in a lower risk. Still, an estimated 3.5% of U.S. cancer deaths can be traced to alcohol. Unfortunately, says oncologist Cary Presant, MD, few people get the message.

“There’s a very low level of awareness of the risk,” says Presant, a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Southern California’s Keck School of Medicine. “We have to counsel our patients on the risks of alcohol. It’s something I talk about with my patients all the time.”

Alcohol requires a balancing act, he says. It may offer some protection for the heart, but, because alcohol affects many other organ systems, Presant says, it also raises the risk of other diseases, including cancer. For example, he says, two drinks a day raises a woman’s risk of breast cancer by 15%. The risk is much lower for women who have one or fewer drinks per day.

Presant advises people who drink to consider potential risk factors, such as a family history of certain cancers, that may help determine whether or not to abstain.

“Talk to your doctor about your family health history, your health habits, and, if necessary, about how to correct unhealthy drinking habits,” Presant says. He adds that all forms of alcohol appear to carry the same risks.

Shapiro says the health benefits are likely to be quite limited, especially when weighed against the potential for abuse. “If you drink, make sure you know what healthy drinking looks like,” he says.

One drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men is a mostly safe and potentially healthy way to unwind.

But if you don’t drink now, don’t reach for the bottle.

“The medical community still does not advise people to start drinking,” Moore says.

By Matt McMillen
WebMD Health News • August 29, 2014