



# CHECK IN

with Dr. Ruby Gill

## LET'S CHECK UP ON... WINE, WELLNESS AND THE MEDITERRANEAN MINDSET

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Living in Lodi means we're surrounded by one of California's greatest agricultural treasures. From vineyards and olive groves to vibrant farmers markets overflowing with seasonal produce, our community is uniquely positioned to embrace a lifestyle that mirrors one of the healthiest dietary patterns in the world, the Mediterranean diet.

As an integrative physician, one of the most common questions I hear from women in perimenopause and menopause is, "Can wine make my hot flashes worse?" The answer is yes—it certainly can. Alcohol is a known trigger for hot flashes in some women, likely because it causes blood vessels to dilate and can disrupt sleep, another major contributor to hormonal symptoms. If you've noticed your symptoms worsen after an evening glass of wine, your body may simply be telling you that less is better.

But that doesn't mean wine is the villain.

The Mediterranean diet, consistently associated with lower rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cognitive decline and overall mortality, has long included moderate wine consumption with meals for those who choose to drink. The emphasis, however, has never been the wine itself. The true health benefits come from the overall dietary pattern—abundant vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, nuts, olive oil, seafood and minimal ultra-processed foods.

That perspective is especially relevant here in Lodi.

Our local farms provide access to fresh, nutrient-dense foods that are naturally rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals and polyphenols. Polyphenols are plant compounds that help combat oxidative stress and chronic inflammation, two biological processes linked to aging, insulin resistance, heart

disease and many chronic illnesses. Colorful berries, leafy greens, tomatoes, grapes, herbs, olives and even walnuts are excellent sources.

Red wine also contains polyphenols, including resveratrol, but it's important to keep this in perspective. The amount of resveratrol in a glass of wine is relatively small, and no one should begin drinking alcohol for health benefits alone. Instead, if you already enjoy wine, think of it as an accompaniment to a healthy meal, not the centerpiece.

Perhaps the greatest lesson we can learn from Mediterranean cultures isn't what fills the wine glass, but what fills the plate—and the company around the table. Meals are shared, portions are balanced, ingredients are fresh and eating is often a slower, more mindful experience. These habits support healthy blood sugar, improve satiety, reduce stress and foster meaningful social connections, all of which influence hormone health and longevity.

In Lodi, we're fortunate to have these ingredients right in our own backyard. Visiting the farmers market, choosing seasonal produce, supporting local agriculture and preparing meals at home are simple ways to bring the Mediterranean lifestyle to life.

Food has always been medicine. The secret isn't found in one nutrient, one supplement or one glass of wine. It's found in balance, quality and the everyday choices that nourish our bodies for years to come. •

*Schedule your integrative medicine consultation with Dr. Ruby Gill today! Take the first step toward thriving again with personalized, evidence-based care tailored to your unique needs. Let Dr. Gill help you reclaim your health, confidence, and joy!*

**Disclaimer:** This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult with your physician or qualified healthcare professional before starting any new treatment, including supplements, to ensure it is appropriate for your individual health needs.



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