

# 9 Reasons Why (the Right Amount of) Coffee Is Good for You

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Ah, coffee. Whether you're cradling a travel mug on your way to work or dashing out after spin class to refuel with a skinny latte, it's hard to imagine a day without it. The caffeine perks you up, and there's something incredibly soothing about sipping a steaming cup of joe. But is drinking coffee good for you?

Good news: The case for coffee is stronger than ever. Study after study indicates you could be getting more from your favorite morning beverage than you thought: Coffee is chock full of substances that may help guard against conditions more common in women, including Alzheimer's disease and heart disease.

Caffeine is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about coffee. But coffee also contains antioxidants and other active substances that may reduce internal inflammation and protect against disease, say nutrition experts from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.



# What are the top health benefits of drinking coffee?

Your brew gives you benefits beyond an energy boost. Here are the top ways coffee can positively impact your health:

## 1 You could live longer.

Recent studies found that coffee drinkers are less likely to die from some of the leading causes of death in women: coronary heart disease

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/cardiovascular\\_diseases/coronary\\_heart\\_disease\\_85,P00207](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/cardiovascular_diseases/coronary_heart_disease_85,P00207)), stroke

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/physical\\_medicine\\_and\\_rehabilitation/stroke\\_85,p01184](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/physical_medicine_and_rehabilitation/stroke_85,p01184)), diabetes

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/womens\\_health/diabetes\\_type\\_1\\_2\\_and\\_gestational\\_85,P01513](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/womens_health/diabetes_type_1_2_and_gestational_85,P01513)) and kidney disease

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/pediatrics/chronic\\_kidney\\_disease\\_22,chronickidneydisease](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/pediatrics/chronic_kidney_disease_22,chronickidneydisease)).

## 2 **Your body may process glucose (or sugar) better.**

That's the theory behind studies that found that people who drink more coffee are less likely to get type 2 diabetes.

## 3 **You're less likely to develop heart failure.**

Drinking one to two cups of coffee a day may help ward off heart failure

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/cardiovascular\\_diseases/heart\\_failure\\_85,P00206](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/cardiovascular_diseases/heart_failure_85,P00206)), when a weakened heart has difficulty pumping enough blood to the body.

## 4 **You are less likely to develop Parkinson's disease.**

Caffeine is not only linked to a lower chance of developing Parkinson's disease

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/nervous\\_system\\_disorders/parkinsons\\_disease\\_85,P00800](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/nervous_system_disorders/parkinsons_disease_85,P00800)), but it may also help those with the condition better control their movements.

## 5 **Your liver will thank you.**

Both regular and decaf coffee seem to have a protective effect on your liver. Research shows that coffee drinkers are more likely to have liver enzyme levels within a healthy range than people who don't drink coffee.

## 6 **Your DNA will be stronger.**

Dark roast coffee decreases breakage in DNA strands, which occur naturally but can lead to cancer or tumors if not repaired by your cells.

## 7 **Your odds of getting colon cancer will go way down.**

One in 23 women develop colon cancer. But researchers found that coffee drinkers — decaf or regular — were 26 percent less likely to develop colorectal cancer

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/digestive\\_disorders/Colon\\_Cancer\\_22,ColonCancer](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/digestive_disorders/Colon_Cancer_22,ColonCancer)).

## 8 You may decrease your risk of getting Alzheimer's disease.

Almost two-thirds of Americans living with Alzheimer's disease

([https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/nervous\\_system\\_disorders/alzheimers\\_disease\\_85,P00772](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/adult/nervous_system_disorders/alzheimers_disease_85,P00772)) are women. But the caffeine in two cups of coffee may provide significant protection against developing the condition. In fact, researchers found that women age 65 and older who drank two to three cups of coffee a day were less likely to develop dementia in general.

## 9 You're not as likely to suffer a stroke.

For women, drinking at least one cup of coffee a day is associated with lowered stroke risk, which is the fourth leading cause of death in women.

### RESEARCH SHOWS

## Need More and More Coffee to Stay Awake?

Johns Hopkins' behavioral pharmacist and addiction researcher Dustin Lee studies caffeine tolerance and says one clue may be that consuming caffeine can lead the body to produce more adenosine, a hormone that helps you feel tired.

## How much coffee is safe for women to drink each day?

It's true, you can have too much of a good thing. Excessive intake of caffeinated coffee can make you jittery and cause:

Increased heart rate

Raised blood pressure

Anxiety

Trouble falling asleep

So how much coffee is the optimal amount to drink to get all the benefits, but avoid the negative side effects?

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, it's safe for most women to drink three to five cups of coffee a day with a maximum intake of 400 milligrams of caffeine. (Caffeine content can vary depending on the type of coffee, but an average 8-ounce cup has 95 milligrams.)

But if you're pregnant or breastfeeding, the rules are different. Check with your obstetrician before adding caffeine into your diet. If coffee gives you the jitters, take care not to overdo it: Caffeine tolerance is different for everyone. You can still get some of the potential health benefits by drinking one cup of coffee a day, or even decaf.

Also, remember that what you add to your coffee can make a difference in how healthy the beverage really is. Instead of loading up on cream and sugar, try adding up to two tablespoons of milk, milk substitute or half-and-half, and using naturally sweet spices and flavorings. Try stirring in a ¼ teaspoon of the following for extra flavor:

Vanilla extract

Cardamom

Cinnamon

Cocoa powder

While coffee is a pleasurable part of your lifestyle, there are other factors that make a bigger impact on your health such as eating a balanced diet, exercising and maintaining a healthy weight. But drinking coffee is a delightful addition to those key health factors.

## Quick & Healthy Coffee Recipe

### Iced Pumpkin Spice “Latte” Smoothie

Blend all ingredients to create a seasonally-inspired drink. Using real pumpkin adds beneficial fiber.

1 cup coffee

½ cup milk of your choice (such as unsweetened vanilla flavored almond milk, skim or 1% milk)

2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice (or ½ teaspoon each ground cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and allspice)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ cup canned plain pumpkin

4 ice cubes

Try to limit added sugar as much as you can! If you MUST add sweetener, try pure maple syrup in a small quantity- start with 1 teaspoon.

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