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## Coffee: What Are The Health Benefits?

If you are a coffee drinker, you no doubt have asked yourself how much coffee is it safe for you to consume on a daily basis. This is not surprising since so much has been blamed on coffee. Heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, you name it. At one time or another, coffee has been made to blame. Coffee has joined the ranks of red wine and chocolate as a guilty pleasure that may actually be good for you. As much as it is a great way to get that fix in the morning, recent studies have shown that coffee has been found to be rich in antioxidants and contains hundreds of pain-relieving and anti-bacterial compounds. Although one should not drink coffee with wild abandon, it's comforting to know that maybe that cup or two in the morning may be good for you. Here is a statistic to ponder: did you know that there are over 160 million coffee drinkers in the United States alone? In terms of consumption, the average American consumes 8.8 lbs. of coffee per year. But consider this: the world leader in terms of consumption is Finland which comes in at nearly 30 lbs per year. That's a lot of coffee! Another statistic is that there have been well over 19,000 studies done to analyze the effects of coffee. Now, studies can often be skewed to show whatever the author wants, but here is what is generally agreed: consuming 2 to 3 cups of coffee per day is often considered more beneficial than harmful. Recent studies have shown that moderate coffee drinking can reduce the risk of colon cancer (due to its ability to keep you regular), gallstones, cirrhosis of the liver and more, due to the fact the it is loaded with healthy antioxidants. So loaded, that studies have implied that coffee contains higher levels of antioxidants compared to other commonly consumed beverages, such as tea and fruit juice. Coffee has joined the ranks of red wine and chocolate as a guilty pleasure that may actually be good for you. As much as it is a great way to get that "fix" in the morning, recent studies have shown that coffee has been found to be rich in antioxidants and contains hundreds of pain-relieving and anti-bacterial compounds. Although one should not drink coffee with wild abandon, it's comforting to know that maybe that cup or two in the morning may be good for you. Several studies are also being conducted on Parkinson's and diabetic Patients. Research has shown that just one cup of coffee per day can halve your risk of Parkinson's, the brain disease that causes tremors and affects movement. Caffeine may protect the brain cells typically lost to Parkinson's disease. However, it has been noted that women on hormone therapy do not seem to benefit. It is felt that Estrogen may dilute the effectiveness of caffeine. It has also been found that if a woman drinks three cups of coffee a day, she can reduce her risk of Type 2 Diabetes by twenty to thirty percent. Coffee may help promote the delivery of insulin to the tissues. Experts believe that coffee's antioxidants, such as chlorogenic acid and caffeine acid, deserve the credit. There are also on going studies that are producing favorable reports on coffee helping to fight Alzheimer's due to the caffeine stimulating the cognitive area of the brain. This is just the tip of the ice berg. People with asthma who drink coffee can have up to 25 percent fewer symptoms because one of the compounds in coffee - theophylline - acts as a bronchodilator. A recent Brazilian study showed that consumption of coffee promotes better sperm mobility - and now studies are in progress to determine whether caffeine can help infertile men. Coffee contains polyphenols, substances that may reduce the risk of cancer and coronary artery disease. Caffeinated coffee, as opposed to decaffeinated coffee, makes you a better thinker. Studies have shown that coffee keeps you focused, particularly when you are doing not-so-pleasant work. A researcher with the U.S. Army stated caffeine improved scores on a range of cognitive tasks, such as decision making, learning, and attention in the sleep-deprived. Coffee can also boost your mood, probably by making you feel more energetic. A little known fact is that coffee contains antioxidants which have been shown to improve overall health. Here is a short list of some benefits which have been shown to be present in coffee: Reduce symptoms of Parkinson's Disease Antibacterial ingredients Reduce the risk of developing gallstones Preserve mental acuity Reduce risk of developing type 2 Diabetes (if you have diabetes, reduce your consumption If you are free of hypertension, coffee will not likely produce it Headache relief Reduce the risk of some types of cancer Improve physical endurance

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