

Coffee seen to protect against cirrhosis

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A study by California's Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program has found another benefit from coffee -- protection against alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver.

For every cup of java, the study found a 20-percent decline in risk of alcoholic cirrhosis, reports The Wall Street Journal. Drinking four cups a day lowered the risk by 80 percent.

The study was based on a review of the medical and death records of 125,580 health-plan members through 2001. The new data appear in the latest edition of the Archives of Internal Medicine.

The report said the study's lead author Arthur Klatsky noted caffeine isn't believed to be the top player because tea drinking produced no lower risk. The study also didn't distinguish between regular and

decaffeinated coffee.

Klatsky said coffee raises blood pressure in inexperienced drinkers but not in veterans. He also said some studies have found a slightly higher risk of heart attack, possibly linked to rises in cholesterol observed when people drink boiled coffee, but not the filtered kind.

Klatsky said his research team doesn't have any stake in or support from the coffee industry.

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