

# All the reasons a cup of coffee really can be good for you

August 21 2024, by Justin Stebbing

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Consuming too much caffeine is definitely bad for your health, and there may be good reasons why some people want to quit it altogether. But if you despair at the idea of giving up your morning coffee, fear not.

There's lots of research out there to show that moderate coffee intake is linked with all sorts of benefits. As well as well-known pluses improving

heart health, a daily cup of coffee even seems to be good for your brain and may help prevent mental illness.

For a start, coffee contains several [essential nutrients](#) beneficial to [overall health](#). A typical eight-ounce cup of coffee provides small amounts of B [vitamins](#)—riboflavin, pantothenic acid, thiamine and niacin—as well as minerals [potassium, manganese, and magnesium](#). The nutrients in coffee can contribute significantly to daily intake when multiple cups are consumed.

It's also rich in [antioxidants](#). In fact, many people—especially in the west—will probably get more antioxidants from coffee than from fruit and vegetables.

So what does drinking coffee actually mean for the body? One of the most [well-known potential benefits](#) of coffee is its ability to boost energy levels and improve mental [alertness](#), especially first thing in the morning or during an afternoon slump.

This is primarily due to caffeine, a natural stimulant found in coffee, which blocks the brain's [inhibitory neurotransmitter adenosine](#), which promotes sleep and suppresses arousal. This leads to increased neuronal firing and the [release](#) of [neurotransmitters](#) like [dopamine](#) and [norepinephrine](#), which enhance mood, reaction time and [cognitive function](#).

However, sometimes it's difficult to work out cause and effect here. People drink coffee at work, for example, and in [social settings](#) with friends, so research has to tease out the effects of the coffee and those of the social aspect of sharing time with friends and colleagues.

## Chronic diseases

In the long term, moderate coffee consumption can help reduce your risk of developing a host of chronic diseases.

## 1. Cardiovascular diseases

Moderate coffee consumption is associated with a reduced risk of [heart disease and stroke](#). Studies indicate that drinking one to two cups of coffee daily may lower the risk of heart failure. Additionally, [coffee consumption](#) has been linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular mortality and [disease](#). Interestingly, even when someone has [abnormal heart rhythms](#), [coffee is not harmful](#) according to [recent](#) data.

## 2. Type 2 diabetes

Coffee may enhance the body's ability to process glucose, [reducing the risk](#) of developing type 2 diabetes. Research has shown that people who consume more coffee have a [lower likelihood](#) of developing this condition.

## 3. Liver diseases

Coffee seems to [help protect](#) the liver. Both regular and decaffeinated coffee have been associated with healthier liver enzyme levels, and coffee drinkers have a [significantly lower risk](#) of liver cirrhosis and liver cancer.

## 4. Cancer

Coffee consumption has been linked to a [reduced risk](#) of several other types of cancer, including colorectal and womb cancers. A [systematic review](#) found that high coffee consumption is associated with an 18% lower risk of [cancer](#).

## 5. Neurodegenerative diseases

[Caffeine](#) is associated with a [lower risk](#) of developing Parkinson's disease and may help those with the condition manage their movements better. Additionally, coffee consumption may reduce the risk of [Alzheimer's disease](#) and other forms of [dementia](#).

### Mental health

As if the physical benefits aren't enough, coffee has also been shown to have [positive](#) effects on [mental health](#). Studies suggest that coffee drinkers have a lower risk of depression, with some findings indicating a 20% reduced risk of becoming depressed.

What's more, coffee consumption has been associated with a decreased risk of suicide. Research has found that people who drink four or more cups a day are 53% less likely to commit [suicide](#).

### Lifespan

With all these benefits, it's not surprising that [research suggests](#) that coffee drinkers tend to live longer than non-drinkers. A large study involving over 400,000 people found that coffee consumption over a period of 12 to 13 years was linked to a lower risk of death—with the strongest effect observed at four to five cups per day.

This longevity [benefit](#) could be due to the cumulative effects of coffee's protective properties against various diseases.

### Moderation required

While coffee offers numerous [health benefits](#), it is essential to consume

it in [moderation](#). It's also advisable to limit added sugars and creams to avoid unnecessary calorie intake.

[Excessive caffeine](#) intake can lead to negative side effects such as jitteriness, anxiety and [sleep disturbances](#). Some people who are especially sensitive to caffeine may need to limit their coffee intake or avoid it altogether, as even [decaffeinated coffee contains caffeine](#).

As with any dietary component, balance is key. By understanding the potential benefits and limitations of coffee, people can make informed decisions about incorporating it into their daily routine.

I, for one, will be sticking to my morning cup.

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