

Coffee's New Buzz

JONESING FOR MORE JAVA? DON'T FEEL GUILTY ABOUT GOING BACK FOR ANOTHER CUP. RESEARCH HAS LINKED COFFEE TO A REDUCED RISK OF VARIOUS CONDITIONS, INCLUDING STROKE AND DIABETES—AND THE PERKS CONTINUE TO MOUNT, THANKS TO A NEW CROP OF STUDIES.

SKIN CANCER

Sunscreen's still a must, but women who downed more than three 8-ounce cups of coffee per day were 20 percent less likely to develop basal cell carcinoma—the most common kind of skin cancer—than those who drank less than 1 cup per month, according to a study presented at an American Association for Cancer Research conference. **Coffee is loaded with inflammation-fighting antioxidants**, says Liz Applegate, Ph.D., professor of nutrition at the University of California at Davis.

DEPRESSION

"Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant, which generally makes people feel better and more energized," says Applegate. That may be why women who sipped 4 cups of regular coffee a day were 20 percent less likely to become depressed over a 10-year period than those who averaged 1 cup or less per week, according to research published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Many studies have found an association between coffee and a lower rate of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. In one Finnish trial, people who had 3 to 5 cups a day in their 40s and 50s were 65 percent less likely to get Alzheimer's in their 60s and 70s than those who drank 2 cups or less daily. **The magic ingredient appears to be a compound that works in concert with caffeine to help produce new brain cells** and strengthen the connections between them, says Gary Arendash, Ph.D., a senior researcher at Phoenix VA Health Care System.

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Percent of women who metabolize caffeine more slowly than others, so they get jittery on less coffee

WHEN TO CUT THE CAF

Although good news abounds, be cautious if...

- YOU HAVE FIBROCYSTIC BREASTS** Some women notice that too much caffeine makes their lumps and bumps more painful.
- YOU STRUGGLE WITH INSOMNIA** Caffeine can stay in your system for more than four hours. Cutting it off after 3 p.m. should help.
- YOU HAVE GERD** "Coffee doesn't cause GERD, or chronic acid reflux, but it may bother some people who have it," says Applegate.
- YOU'RE AT HIGH RISK FOR OSTEOPOROSIS** Caffeine can leach calcium from your bones, says Arendash, but this shouldn't be a problem if you eat plenty of milk and dairy products.

•YOU TAKE PRESCRIPTION MEDS

Check with your doctor to make sure caffeine won't interact with your Rx.