

Studies Show that Coffee can Boost Brain Function, Burn Fat and More

By Michael Ravensthorpe, *Natural News*



Few beverages divide the natural health world quite like coffee. For every one expert who proclaims that coffee is one of the healthiest drinks we can consume, there seems to be at least one other expert who proclaims the exact opposite: that quitting coffee is a prerequisite for establishing a healthier lifestyle.

While there can be disadvantages to drinking coffee (for example, coffee can contribute to insomnia and restlessness in some individuals), studies continue to show that regular consumption of this aromatic and much-loved beverage is overwhelmingly beneficial for the average person's health -- especially if the coffee is sourced from high-quality, organic beans.

Coffee boosts brain function

Coffee beans are one of the world's greatest sources of caffeine, a bitter alkaloid proven to benefit brain function. For example, a study published in *Psychopharmacology* found that as little as 32 milligrams of caffeine (less than that found in a single cup of coffee) "significantly improved auditory vigilance and visual reaction time." A review featured in *Nutrition Bulletin* also found that caffeine had beneficial effects on mood and mental clarity.

According to researcher Bertil B. Fredholm, caffeine's cognitive benefits stem from its ability to block the inhibitory neurotransmitter adenosine in the brain. When adenosine is blocked, the amount of other neurotransmitters -- including the "motivation" neurotransmitter dopamine -- increases, leading to a greater firing of neurons. For this reason, drinking a cup of coffee before an important intellectual event, such as taking an exam, could help improve performance.

Coffee helps burn fat

There's a good reason why caffeine is found in most commercial fat-burning supplements: It works. For example, research published in the *American Journal of Physiology* showed that

caffeinated coffee increased lipid oxidation (the degradation of fat) by 10 percent in obese women and a whopping 29 percent in lean women. This effect tends to diminish with age, however, and it is more pronounced in younger people.

Additionally, studies show that caffeine can increase our metabolic rate by up to 10 percent depending on the amount consumed (larger doses tend to produce greater effects). Therefore, if you think that your sluggish metabolism might be contributing to your inability to lose weight, consider adding more coffee to your diet and see if it helps.

Coffee guards us from serious neurodegenerative diseases

Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease are the most common causes of dementia in the Western world, and there are no known cures for them. That said, it is possible to minimize our risk of them by eating a diet rich in organic whole foods, remaining active and -- if the studies are to be believed -- drinking more coffee.

For example, a European study entitled "Does caffeine intake protect from Alzheimer's disease?" found that caffeine exposure among patients "was found to be significantly inversely associated with [Alzheimer's disease]." Moreover, a study provided by the American Neurological Association showed that coffee drinkers have a lower risk of Parkinson's disease than non-coffee drinkers.

Coffee is packed with antioxidants

While coffee is not an especially rich source of essential nutrients (it contains small amounts of certain B vitamins and minerals, and that's it), it is one of the world's finest sources of disease-fighting antioxidants. In fact, research published in *The Journal of Nutrition* found that coffee was the single greatest contributor to antioxidant intake among the patients tested (yes, even more than fruits and vegetables). Clearly, this is a beverage that none of us should feel guilty about consuming!

Sources:

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