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Our June 2019 Newsletter for Healthy Living

Thinking About Coffee

You know that feeling of energy and productivity you get after finishing your morning's first cup of coffee? It turns out you can get that without even drinking a drop, just by thinking about coffee. The provocative finding not only highlights the power of thought but also suggests you may be able to get a boost just from thinking about your favorite brew — a habit that may benefit those who drink coffee too close to bedtime.

To be clear, organic black coffee can be quite healthy, but for those looking to abstain (such as during pregnancy), your alertness needn't suffer — just think about pouring yourself a cup. In a study involving people from both Western and Eastern cultures, researchers from the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management exposed participants to coffee- and tea-related cues in a series of studies. The authors stated: "People often encounter coffee-related cues, or think about coffee, without actually ingesting it ... We wanted to see if there was an association between coffee and arousal such that if we simply exposed people to coffee-related cues, their physiological arousal would increase, as it would if they had actually drunk coffee."



While a lot is known about the physiological effects of coffee and caffeine on the body, the researchers explained, less is known about its psychological effects. However, it appears that many people's brains may be primed

toward arousal at the very thought of coffee, especially in the West, where coffee dominates over tea. After being exposed to coffee-related cues, such as images of coffee, the study participants perceived time as shorter and thought in more concrete, precise terms, which is suggestive of a more alert state of mind.

The researchers continued, "People who experience physiological

arousal – again, in this case as the result of priming and not drinking coffee itself — see the world in more specific, detailed terms. This has a number of implications for how people process information and make judgments and decisions. In North America we have this image of a prototypical executive rushing off to an important meeting with a triple espresso in their hand. There's this connection between drinking caffeine and arousal that may not exist in other culture." In fact, the effects were stronger among Westerners than those in Eastern cultures, perhaps because the West maintains a stronger association between coffee and alertness.

"Coffee is linked to a host of brain benefits, including prevention of cognitive decline and reduced risk of stroke."

Many people love to wake up to the scent of coffee, and it seems this, too, may be one way to jump-start your day — and your brain. Researchers had university students take GMAT algebra tests in a computer lab with an ambient coffee-like scent or no scent. Those in the coffee-scented room performed better on analytical reasoning tasks. The researchers also did a follow-up survey asking whether participants believed they would perform better in a room scented with coffee or flowers or no scent at all. Most believed the coffee-scented room would boost their performance, and this expectation, the researchers concluded, was partly responsible for the improved performance shown during testing. "Our results thus demonstrate that a coffee-like scent (which actually contains no caffeine) can elicit a placebo effect," the study noted. The findings lend even more support to the notion that keeping a bag of coffee beans on hand for a quick whiff could give you a mental boost — no coffee drinking required.

Coffee is one of the most consumed beverages in the world, and it's intriguing that the love for coffee runs so deep that it may exert effects via scent or suggestion. However, the case can be made that drinking coffee is a good habit to get into, as it's been linked to decreased mortality from a number of diseases, including heart disease, neurological diseases, Type 2 diabetes and several types of cancer, including endometrial and liver. There are more than 800 volatile compounds in coffee, although caffeine and chlorogenic acids are the most common. While it was long suggested that coffee consumption could be

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Thinking About Coffee

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harmful, it's now generally believed that moderate amounts of coffee (three to four cups) have few health risks and much evidence of health benefits. In one review of 112 meta-analyses about coffee, this popular beverage was linked to a probable decreased risk of colorectal, colon, endometrial and prostate cancers, cardiovascular disease and mortality and

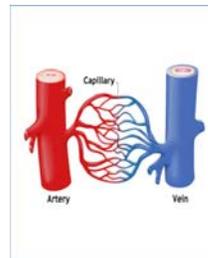
drink coffee, people who drank three or more cups of coffee a day during middle age had a lower incidence of SBI. There are many heart-healthy actions you can take, from eating right to exercising — but is drinking coffee among them?

It turns out that even your heart can benefit from a cup of joe. Research presented at the American Heart Asso-

stress." While many of the benefits of coffee, including its cognitive ones, are often attributed to caffeine, research has shown similar benefits, including increased alertness, leading researchers to speculate that there may be other properties in coffee responsible for its psychoactive effects.

If you're not a coffee drinker, there's no reason to feel compelled to start. There are still many other dietary additions you can make to naturally ward off disease and improve your health. However, if you enjoy coffee, there's good reason to savor a cup — or a few — each day, though there are some caveats to consider. Coffee, which is a heavily pesticide-sprayed crop,

should always be organic, as well as shade-grown. Coffee is a shade-loving plant, but growers often strip forests to make growing and harvesting easier.



This destroys the ecological habitat of

many natural pest deterrents, such as birds and lizards, while the pests flourish, resulting in additional pesticide use in nonshade-grown varieties.

Drink your coffee black, skipping the added sugar and milk or cream, as the antioxidant capacity of coffee may be significantly decreased by the addition of milk. If you want to add something to your coffee, try coconut oil or medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) oil, which may help you burn fat and improve mitochondrial function. Start with a small amount, such as 1 teaspoon of MCT oil, working your way up to 1 or 2 tablespoons, to avoid gastrointestinal side effects. You can also blend in a pat of raw grass fed butter. This recipe is a favorite among those following a ketogenic diet. Or you start with the "Bulletproof" blend that we serve in our Café. Finally, while most people can safely consume coffee, if you're pregnant you should avoid it. Consuming coffee during pregnancy has been linked to low birth weight babies.

Reference: *Conscious Cognition* 2019 April; 70:57-69. University of Toronto March 26, 2019. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 2018 June; 57:83-86. *Annual Review of Nutrition* 2017 August 21:37:131-56. *Practical Neurology* 2016 April; 16(2):89-95. *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease* 2016 July; 25(7):1678-82. *Journal of the American Heart Association* March 24, 2018. *Molecules* 2014 November; 19(11):19180-19208. *Nutrients* 2018 October; 10(10):1386. *Food Chemistry* 2012 Oct. 15; 134(4):1870-7.

"Brewed coffee is a complex food matrix with numerous phytochemical components."

Parkinson's disease, with researchers noting, "Given the spectrum of conditions studied and the robustness of many of the results, these findings indicate that coffee can be part of a healthful diet."

As far as your brain is concerned, drinking coffee is known to boost alertness, well-being and concentration, along with improving mood and reducing depression. While it can potentially disrupt your sleep, particularly if you drink it at night, and may increase anxiety in certain people, coffee is linked to a host of brain benefits, including: prevention of cognitive decline; reduced risk of stroke, and lower risk of Alzheimer's disease.

The benefits of drinking coffee may only get better with age — a major positive, since for many the love for coffee is lifelong. In fact, a 10-year study presented at the European Society of Cardiology congress in Barcelona showed that people who drank four cups of coffee per day had a 64% decrease in their risk of dying from any cause.

Among those aged 45 and over, however, every two cups of daily coffee lowered the risk of dying during the study period by 30%; no such association was seen in younger adults. In another study, this one in individuals aged 60 years and older, drinking two or more cups of coffee a day was associated with a lower risk of impaired agility in women and in those with obesity. Consuming two or more cups of coffee a day was also associated with a lower risk of impaired mobility in women.

Coffee may also have a protective effect as you age, including in the case of silent brain infarction (SBI), which are often found in brain scans in healthy elderly people and may be associated with dementia and cognitive decline. Compared with those who didn't

ciation's Scientific Sessions 2017 found, for instance, that compared to non-coffee drinkers, coffee drinkers had a 7 percent lower risk of heart failure and an 8 percent lower risk of stroke for each additional cup of coffee consumed per week. Drinking more than three cups of coffee a day may also lower your risk of developing atherosclerosis, also known as clogged arteries, a condition that seriously increases your heart disease risk, by 63%, particularly in people who have never smoked. "Based on our results and prior studies, consumption of coffee could exert a potential beneficial effect against coronary calcification and cardiovascular disease risk, particularly in nonsmokers," researchers wrote in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. "It is possible that deleterious effects of smoking overwhelm the benefits of coffee intake on early cardiovascular disease injury, so this impact of coffee may occur only in people who have never smoked."

When you think of antioxidants, you may think mostly about fruits and vegetables, but coffee is another excellent source. Further, because coffee is so widely consumed, it's considered to be a major contributor to dietary antioxidants. With each sip, you're gaining these beneficial compounds that can scavenge free radicals and more, as researchers explained in *Molecules*:

"Brewed coffee is a complex food matrix with numerous phytochemical components that have antioxidant activity capable of scavenging free radicals, donating hydrogen and electrons, providing reducing activity and also acting as metal ion pro-oxidant chelators. More recent studies have shown that coffee components can trigger tissue antioxidant gene expression and protect against gastrointestinal oxidative

Avoiding Endocrine-Disruptors

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) are similar in structure to natural hormones such as the female sex hormone estrogen, the male sex hormone androgen and thyroid hormones, which allow them to interfere

PBDEs), perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs), organophosphate pesticides and glycol ethers. According to the Hormone Health Network, a branch of the Endocrine Society, there are an estimated 1,000 chemicals on the market with en-

chemicals that can leach into your food, especially if the plastic is heated. **Avoid by:** Using glass containers and ceramic and enameled cast iron cookware.

Cleaning products — Commercial solutions used to clean your floors, toilets, oven, windows and more typically contain industrial chemicals that may throw your hormones out of whack. Many EDCs also lurk in fragrances. **Avoid by:** Creating your own cleaning products

“The evidence for adverse reproductive outcomes from exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals is strong.”

with development, reproduction, neurological functioning, metabolism, satiety and your immune system function. For example, they may block certain hormonal signals, alter your hormone levels, or change the way your natural hormones travel through your body.

As noted in a World Health Organization (WHO) report published in 2012, the effects of EDCs on your hormonal systems “can lead to obesity, infertility or reduced fertility, learning and memory difficulties, Type 2 diabetes or cardiovascular disease, as well as a variety of other diseases.” What’s more, since hormones operate at parts per million and parts per billion concentrations, the Endocrine Society warns there may be no safe level of exposure for many EDCs and that the health effects are so great everyone needs to take proactive steps to avoid them — especially those seeking to get pregnant, pregnant women and young children.

Commenting on the publication of its first scientific statement on EDCs in 2009, the Endocrine Society noted that: *“The evidence for adverse reproductive outcomes (infertility, cancers, malformations) from exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals is strong, and there is mounting evidence for effects on other endocrine systems, including thyroid, neuroendocrine, obesity and metabolism, and insulin and glucose homeostasis ...* The strongest evidence, the report found, is for the link between EDC exposure and: obesity, diabetes, female reproduction, male reproduction, hormone-sensitive cancers in women, prostate problems in men and thyroid problems. While the list of known EDCs is extensive, a dozen of the worst and most widely used ones, identified by the Environmental Working Group in 2013, include: bisphenol-A (BPA), dioxane, atrazine, phthalates, perchlorate, lead, mercury, arsenic, fire retardants (polybrominated diethyl ethers or

doocrine-disrupting properties.

Following are 10 common routes of exposure, and some common-sense tips for how to avoid them: **Personal care products** — Shampoos, conditioners, moisturizers and cosmetics often contain EDCs. **Avoid by:** Switching to certified organic and/or homemade personal care products. **Drinking water** — Your drinking water may be contaminated with atrazine, glyphosate, arsenic, perchlorate and/or fire retardant chemicals, all of which may disrupt your endocrine system. **Avoid by:** Filtering your water, both at your tap and your shower/bath, using a high-quality water filtration system. **Canned goods and nonstick food packaging** — These are common sources of BPA and similar EDCs such as BPS, or other toxic substitutes such as PVC. **Avoid by:** Buying products that come in glass bottles and jars rather than plastic or cans. **Conventionally grown produce and CAFO meat, poultry and dairy products** — Pesticides, herbicides and industrial runoff may coat your conventionally grown fruits and vegetables in EDCs. Animals raised on concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) also typically contain antibiotics, hormones and other industrial chemicals that may disrupt your endocrine system. **Avoid by:** Buying and eating organic produce and grass fed animal products to minimize exposure to endocrine-disrupting pesticides, herbicides and veterinary drugs.

High-mercury fish — Fish contaminated with high levels of mercury and other heavy metals include shark, swordfish, king mackerel, marlin, sea bass and tuna as the worst offenders. **Avoid by:** Carefully selecting seafood known to be low in contaminants such as sardines, anchovies, mackerel and herring. Wild-caught Alaskan salmon is another good choice. **Kitchenware** — Plastic containers and bottles may contain BPA or other endocrine-disrupting plastic

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using different combinations of vinegar, baking soda, essential oils and even coconut oil. **Household dust** —

Fire retardant chemicals are often found lurking in household dust as they shed from treated furniture such as couches, mattresses and carpet padding. **Avoid by:** Buying “green” nontoxic furniture, mattresses and building materials whenever possible and using a HEPA filter for your vacuum. When mopping and dusting, use a wet mop or rag to avoid scattering the dust. **Office products** —

Ink cartridges, toners and other solvents common in office environments are another common source of EDCs. **Avoid by:** Handling such products with care and minimize exposure as much as possible. **Cash register receipts** —

Thermal paper typically contains BPA, and research shows handling this type of paper is enough to increase the BPA level in your body. **Avoid by:** carrying receipts apart from your wallet or purse, handle minimally, and wash your hands after handling receipts.

Reference: Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine 2012 June 1; 166(6):E1-E7. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Endocrine Disruptors. WHO Report: State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals 2012. Endocrine Society, Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals, Where We Stand. Endocrine Review 2009 June; 30(4):293-342. Endocrine Review 2015 Dec;36(6):E1-E150. EWG.org Dirty Dozen Endocrine Disruptors October 28, 2013.



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