8 Ways Coffee Saves Your Life

Coffee is known for some very obvious benefits that will be discussed here soon, but is also beneficial in many ways that may even shock the most hipster spirited of us all. Now when referring to coffee in this article, let’s be clear that we are speaking in terms of black coffee, not your caramel frap macchiato with 5 pumps of vanilla, add 3 packets of sugar. Now that we have made that distinction let's look at why drinking coffee is saving your life!

**Coffee Provides Alertness**
Starting with the most obvious, at 95mg of caffeine per 8 ounces, coffee is a great natural stimulate to help wake you up or keep you focused after long hours. This is because caffeine is a powerful stimulant that improves strength and endurance while also providing mental stimulation. Caffeine works by blocking adenosine receptors, which inhibits sedation and relaxation. As adenosine is blocked, norepinephrine and dopamine begin firing and help light up neurons in the brain, promoting alertness! Whether it be to finish that business report, finish your 12th hour straight as a nurse, or to get you through that overnight drive, coffee is there to help you keep going!

**Coffee Keeps You Happy**
Another common side effect of coffee, is that is elicits happiness. As mentioned previously, the caffeine in coffee will block adenosine receptors, allowing dopamine to light up the brain. Dopamine is released from neurons in the brain and is a precursor to norepinephrine. Dopamine is known for the pleasure-inducing effects it has on the body, and one reason why many people can feel addicted to the feeling coffee gives them, alongside the need of the energy from the caffeine content. While coffee should not be used as a substitute for clinical depression, it does a great job keeping people happy throughout a stressful day!

**Coffee Increases Endurance**
While we know coffee provides alertness, did you know it actually can increases endurance? This is because the caffeine content will promote the body to utilize fatty acids to burn for energy first, opposed to our glycogen stores, allowing those to be saved for later in the workout. While this is proven more for aerobic exercise, such as a long run or swim, anaerobic exercise benefits have been seen too. The consumption of coffee/caffeine prior to anaerobic exercise, such as weight training or sprints, have shown an increase to individual’s tolerance to pain being higher than without it. So what does increased endurance provide us? A healthier-stronger body all around as we are able to push our body for longer which will culminate into more muscle, stronger bones, and a healthier cardiovascular system.

**Coffee is Cholesterol Safe**
A benefit that you may not be aware of is that coffee is cholesterol friendly! Now some of you avid coffee-drinkers may question that as you have heard quite the opposite. In fact, coffee by nature can raise cholesterol, but it’s due to a chemical naturally found in coffee beans called cafestrol. This chemical will indeed raise cholesterol levels, but by simply filtering your coffee through a paper filter, and cafestrol is left behind! Additionally, coffee contains magnesium! Magnesium is an essential mineral for staying healthy and is required for more than 300 biochemical reactions in the body. Multiple health benefits of magnesium include transmission of nerve impulses, body temperature regulation, detoxification, energy production, and the formation of healthy bones and teeth.

**Coffee Lowers Your Risk of Stroke**In many studies over the last 3 years, moderate coffee consumption has been shown to reduce CVD (cardiovascular disease). It is believed this is the case due to the dilation of blood vessels when coffee is consumed, allowing for less blood clotting. It has been found that CAC (coronary artery calcium) was least built up in subjects consuming 3-5 cups a day compared to those who drank less. Coffee also contains potassium. The health benefits of potassium include relief from stroke, blood pressure, heart and kidney disorders, anxiety and stress, as well as enhanced muscle strength, metabolism, water balance, electrolytic functions, and nervous system
Researchers also propose that the effect coffee has on Type 2 Diabetes may also be a cause for this as we will later discuss.

**Coffee Lowers Risk of Some Cancers**In 2015, scientists at the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition Study (EPIC) found a 19 percent lower risk of endometrial cancer among women drinking three cups of coffee a day versus non-coffee drinkers.
In the United States, the long-running Nurses’ Health Study (NHS) showed an 18 percent lower risk among women drinking four cups a day compared with women who never drank coffee. Similar studies have shown a lower risk of colon cancer, liver cancer, and malignant melanoma among coffee drinkers.

**Coffee May Combat Type 2 Diabetes**
As hinted to previously in the article, coffee is believed to help prevent Type 2 Diabetes. According to a new study led by Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) researchers have found coffee consumption to be associated with improved insulin sensitivity and a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. While more testing needs to be conducted to further provide correlation, coffee may at minimum have a positive impact to fight off Type 2 Diabetes in conjunction with healthy diet and exercise.
**Coffee Lowers a Man’s Risk of ED**
While erectile dysfunction is a gender-specific problem that may not be viewed as essential to maintain a healthy life, over 50% of men suffer from it. Thus, improvements can lead to both enhancements to wellbeing, depression, and overall performance. Coffee is shown to relax and dilate blood vessels allowing for increased blood flow. While the effects of coffee consumption cannot be compared to that of over the counter prescription drugs such as Viagra or Cialis, it's a healthy option that can aid in performance!

So what’s the take home? Don’t be afraid to have yourself a cup of Joe! With all of its potential health benefits, coffee along with a healthy diet and lifestyle can promote a longer and healthier life! Time for me to fill up my cup, have a great day!