

I am not encouraging non coffee drinkers to start, but this is reassuring for you coffee drinkers out there.--Claudia

New York Times

MAY 16, 2012,

Coffee Drinkers May Live Longer

By [TARA PARKER-POPE](#)

Your morning cup of coffee may start to taste even better after a major government study found that frequent coffee drinkers have a lower risk of dying from a variety of diseases, compared with people who drink little or no coffee.

The report, [published online in The New England Journal of Medicine](#) on Wednesday, analyzed the coffee-drinking habits of more than 400,000 men and women ages 50 to 71, making it the largest-ever study of the relationship between coffee consumption and health.

Previous studies have offered conflicting results on the relative benefits or harms associated with regular coffee consumption. While coffee contains caffeine, a stimulant that may temporarily increase heart rate and blood pressure in some people, coffee also contains hundreds of unique compounds and antioxidants that may confer health benefits. Further confusing much of the research into coffee is the fact that many coffee drinkers are also smokers, and it has been difficult to untangle the relative health effects of coffee and cigarettes.

To learn more, researchers from the National Institutes of Health analyzed diet and health information collected from questionnaires filled out by 229,119 men and 173,141 women who were members of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) between 1995 and 1996. The respondents were followed until 2008, by which point 52,000 had died.

As expected, the researchers found that the regular coffee drinkers in the group were also more likely to be smokers. They ate more red meat and fewer fruits and vegetables, exercised less and drank more alcohol – all behaviors associated with poor health.

But once the researchers controlled for those risks, the data showed that the more coffee a person consumed, the less likely he or she was to die from a number of health problems, including diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disease, stroke, infections and even injuries and accidents.

Over all, the risk of dying during the 14-year study period was about 10 percent lower for men and about 15 percent lower for women who drank anywhere from two cups to six or more cups of coffee a day. The association between coffee and lower risk of dying was similar whether the coffee drinker consumed caffeinated or decaffeinated coffee.

[Neal D. Freedman](#), the study's lead author and an investigator for the National Cancer Institute, cautioned that the findings, based on observational data, show only an association between coffee consumption and lower risk for disease, so it isn't known whether drinking more coffee will lead to better health. As a result, Dr. Freedman said that people should be conservative in interpreting the data, but that regular coffee drinkers can be reassured.