

# YES! COFFEE is good for you Discover the surprising healthy benefits of your caffeine habit

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Do you kick-start your day with a cup of home-brewed coffee? Or perhaps you like to pick up a milky latte from your local cafe? If so, you're in luck – new research has found that having a regular coffee may be healthier than you think.\* This is great to hear, seeing as us Brits drink around 95 million cups of it a day, the majority of which is at breakfast time.\*\*

'Coffee is high in beneficial nutrients, including vitamins B2, B3 and B5, magnesium and potassium,' says Healthspan nutritionist Rob Hobson. 'It's also a good source of antioxidant plant compounds, called polyphenols, which research shows may help to keep blood vessels healthy, improve circulation and reduce inflammation.' If you love your daily fix, here's how to drink right to reap all the rewards...

## You'll think smarter

Need a brain boost? Coffee can help. 'Coffee is a stimulant that can help you to feel more mentally alert,' says Rob. 'A shot of caffeine can be helpful if you need to concentrate.' In fact, regular coffee drinkers (those who drink two to three cups a day), found it easier to focus, to learn and had better memory recall than non-coffee drinkers, according to a new Portuguese study. But, you don't have to be a regular coffee drinker to experience these benefits – even just one cup can have an immediate effect and help you to think smarter.

## It boosts your mood

Coffee may help to alleviate depression and low mood by a third, found a Harvard Medical School review. 'Coffee blocks the function of the brain hormone adenosine, which reduces perceptions of fatigue,' says nutritionist Lily Soutter. 'It increases the activity of other neurotransmitters, such as energising adrenaline, and the feel-good chemical dopamine. Coffee also lowers inflammation (which can trigger depression), helping to boost brain chemistry and mood.' and the endurance to keep you going,' says Rob. Coffee is a useful ergogenic aid, which means it enhances energy. Those who drank coffee before a 5km bike ride cycled faster and performed slightly better than those who didn't, found a study by Coventry University.

## You'll burn more calories

Want to lose weight? 'Caffeine may help to boost your metabolic rate and increase fat burning,' says dietician Lola Biggs. 'It does this by stimulating the nervous system, which sends direct signals to the fat cells, encouraging the body to break down fat as fuel. But, this will only help with weight loss if you're also eating a healthy diet and expending more energy than you take in.'

## How much is too much?

Moderation is essential to ensure you're only getting the benefits and nothing negative. 'The recommended daily intake for caffeine is 400mg – about four cups a day,' says Lola. 'But be aware of other foods and drinks that contain caffeine, such as chocolate or energy drinks, as that may increase your intake. If it's having a negative effect on you, try decaf (which still contains a tiny amount of caffeine).'