

The buzz on coffee and coffee drinks

There is increasing scientific evidence for benefits related to coffee consumption including lower death rates from all causes and from cardiovascular disease, and decreases in rates of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, arrhythmia, stroke and some cancers, especially aggressive breast and prostate cancers. Drinking coffee may lower the incidence of gallstones and reduce the risk or delay the onset of Parkinson's Disease. A large study showed a decrease in dementia and Alzheimer's Disease among coffee drinkers. Coffee isn't linked to high blood pressure and people with managed high blood pressure can safely drink it.

Caffeine is responsible for increased alertness and decreased fatigue, but other substances in coffee (minerals and nutrients such as boron, chromium, magnesium, potassium and niacin) may also be of benefit. Coffee is the number one source of antioxidants in the American diet, because of the high level of coffee consumption. Non-dairy creamer and sugar may reduce the concentration of antioxidants in coffee.

There are some caveats related to coffee:

- If you are sensitive to caffeine, avoid it rather than drink it in hopes of reaping health benefits.
- Don't drink coffee with caffeine within several hours of bedtime to avoid disruption of sleep.
- Pregnant women are advised to limit caffeine.
- Tests of coffee shop and grocery store products labeled as "decaf" found some caffeine in all except Folger's Crystals Instant Coffee.
- Coffee is known to interact with a wide range of medications. See the list in the page about coffee at www.webmed.com. Check with your health care provider if you have questions.
- Large-size coffee drinks with a lot of sugar and cream, so popular in recent years, can contribute to weight gain. To cut calories, choose a smaller size, low-fat or nonfat milk, and cut out the sugar or whipped cream. You can sweeten it with sugar-free sweeteners or sugar-free syrup, or slowly reduce the amount of sugar you use until you prefer it less sweet or unsweetened.
from www.tuftshealthletter.com and www.webmd.com

Recipe of the Week: Chinese Green Bean Salad

from Jane Brody's Good Food Book

serves 6

Salad:

- 1 pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 2" lengths
- 2 Tablespoons sesame seeds, lightly toasted

Dressing:

- 1 Tablespoon finely minced fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon finely minced garlic
- 1 Tablespoon salad oil
- 1 Tablespoon mild vinegar (such as rice vinegar)
- 1 teaspoon Oriental sesame oil
- 1 to 2 teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce, to taste
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Steam beans over boiling water for 4 to 5 minutes, or blanch in boiling water for 2 to 3 minutes. Beans should be crunchy but not hard. Cool beans immediately in cold water to stop the cooking. Transfer to serving bowl.
2. Combine dressing ingredients in a small bowl. Pour over beans and toss to coat well. Chill before servings.
3. Just before serving, stir in toasted seeds. To toast sesame seeds, place in a dry skillet and stir or shake over moderately low heat till lightly browned.

Nutrition information:

Calories: 71	Total Fat 5g	Saturated Fat: 0.5 g
Sodium: 55 mg		Carbohydrate: 7 g
Dietary Fiber: 3g		Protein: 2g

Tip of the Week: Don't let growing older stop you! A new study of competitive runners, cyclists and swimmers from age 40 to 80, suggests that regular exercise can slow or stop the loss of muscle mass and deterioration of muscle tissue usually associated with aging. --- from *Aging Well through Exercise* by Gretchen Reynolds, well.blogs.nytimes.com