

By Jean-Marc Dupuis

A goat discovers a miracle cure!

Coffee was discovered by goats in Ethiopia according to the historian Antoine Faustus Nairon.

A shepherd, Kaldi, once dropped a branch of a shrub on a stove. The seeds roasted, giving off a delicious aroma. The goats rushed to taste it. Then they couldn't sleep all night because they were so excited.

This story dates back to 1671. But human interest in coffee has only increased since then, so much so that it is now the second most exported product in the world, after oil!

Everything has been said about coffee.

So, today, it's important that I tell you the good news: there is no longer any doubt. Coffee is really good for your health. Enjoy it as much as you like. In no way do its few small drawbacks, which I will detail later, outweigh its fantastic health effects.

A major study concludes the subject

The results of the largest ever study on coffee were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2012.

You have to understand the researchers, they were like you and me!

For decades, they had heard that coffee could do the best... and the worst.

To find out, they recruited more than 400,000 people between the ages of 50 and 71 and followed them for 13 years.

The conclusion is simple: **the more coffee people drink, the lower their risk of death.**

The optimal amount is 4-5 cups per day: the risk of death for men is then reduced by 12% and for women by 16%.

Beyond that, the death curve stops falling.

In contrast, even moderate coffee consumption (1 cup per day) is already associated with a 5-6% reduced risk of death.

Perhaps these numbers seem small to you. But with hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people drinking coffee, the overall effect on humanity of the benefits of coffee is simply enormous.

It should be noted, however, that this major study did not break out like a thunderclap in a serene sky.

For years, impressive evidence of the virtues of coffee had been accumulating.

Coffee reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease

Coffee could reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease by 20%. The optimal amount for a protective effect is 3 to 5 cups per day [2].

Coffee reduces the risk of diabetes

According to a large Finnish study conducted from 1982 to 1992, regular coffee drinkers are less affected by type 2 diabetes [3].

Coffee is good for your teeth

Caffeine prevents *Streptococcus mutans* bacteria from adhering to the teeth and colonising the tooth enamel [4].

A recent Brazilian study has shown that its antibacterial effect protects against caries [5].

However, this effect only applies to coffee without sugar and milk.

Coffee reduces the risk of gallstones

Drinking 3 to 4 cups of coffee a day reduces the risk of gallstones by 20 to 30%. This effect is thought to be due to the caffeine, as decaffeinated coffee is not effective in this case [6].

Coffee protects overweight people

Overweight people are at high risk of developing insulin resistance leading to diabetes, and of suffering from fat accumulation in the liver.

This disease, which is called "cirrhosis of the liver", can be extremely serious, although it is not noticeable at first. If the liver also becomes inflamed, this is called fatty liver. Total destruction of the liver can occur, resulting in the patient's death.

Published data from the USA, Europe and Japan are extremely worrying, indicating that between 10% and 25% of adults suffer from this disease. The main cause of these frightening figures is the increase in obesity in these countries [7].

However, drinking coffee may reduce these risks, according to a study just published in the journal *Pharmaceutical Research*, which describes experiments conducted on mice [8].

Coffee increases alertness

It goes without saying, but it's even better when you say it: coffee is excellent for increasing alertness and intellectual performance.

Many car accidents are prevented by coffee and, according to the latest US army study, soldiers deprived of sleep for 72 hours react better and faster to shooting exercises after drinking 200-300 mg of caffeine [9].

The effects start within 10 minutes of drinking coffee [10].

Some people are concerned about the stimulating effect of caffeine on blood pressure. While it is true that caffeine increases blood pressure by 7 to 10 mm of mercury, it then decreases and is not a threat to people with high blood pressure.

A huge excess of caffeine can kill, but you would have to drink 80 to 100 cups of coffee quickly to reach the lethal dose. It's not that hard to remember not to do it!

Coffee is the primary source of antioxidants in the Western diet

The first component of coffee that comes to mind is caffeine, but coffee contains hundreds of substances. Many have not even been discovered by science yet. Some have been studied but we are far from knowing all their effects and interactions.

Many of these compounds are antioxidants that protect our cells and organs from oxidation, the damage caused by free radicals in our bodies.

Without going into complicated details, oxidation is considered to be one of the mechanisms of ageing [11].

It seems hard to believe, yet coffee is the number one source of antioxidants in the Western diet, surpassing both fruits and vegetables combined!

Coffee contains even more antioxidants than red wine [12] [13].

An exceptional drink

Coffee is therefore without question an exceptional drink.

Some people go even further than all the benefits I have mentioned, claiming that coffee reduces heart risk, cancer risk, improves morale, memory, increases libido and so on [14].

However, the sources cited are coffee research "institutes" funded by the coffee industry, whose seriousness I cannot vouch for.

No danger to the heart

Coffee has a reputation for being bad for the heart, even among doctors.

Cardiology researchers at Northwestern University (Chicago, USA) have compiled information on hundreds of thousands of coffee drinkers.

They were able to show that coffee :

- does not increase blood pressure in the long term,
- does not increase the risk of heart attack (but may decrease it),
- does not increase the risk of stroke,
- does not increase the risk of heart rhythm disorders (arrhythmia).

However, coffee can increase the frequency of extrasystoles (a feeling of "skipping heart").

This is the reason why the use of the term "health risk" is so important (e.g., "health risk") in people who are prone to it, but not harmful to health [15].

When you drink your coffee, it's not just the pleasure of its sweet smell and delicious aromas, it's a real elixir of youth that you offer to your body and mind...

Disadvantages of coffee

As nothing is ever black and white, I must point out that there are a few minor drawbacks to coffee.

These are small drawbacks compared to the health benefits of coffee.

However, I must point them out to you, especially as they are important to some people:

- People who have problems with heartburn and acid reflux may find their problems worsened by coffee;
- people who suffer from poor sleep, which is not very restorative, benefit from avoiding coffee

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- People with a tendency to anaemia should also limit their coffee consumption. Because of its tannins, it reduces the absorption of iron.