

Court Orders Cancer Warning Signs on Coffee Products

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Category : Health

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **preside** / **priˈzaid** / (v) – to be in charge or in control of something
Example: The famous judge will **preside** at the trial.
- 2. **unequivocal** / **ˌʌn ɪˈkwɪv ə kəl** / (adj) – very clear and firm
Example: The prosecution gave **unequivocal** evidence at the court.
- 3. **disprove** / **dɪsˈpruv** / (v) – to say that something is false
Example: Some scientists **disprove** the theory of evolution.
- 4. **disregard** / **ˌdɪs rɪˈɡɑrd** / (v) – to ignore something
Example: You should not **disregard** other people’s feelings.
- 5. **worst-case scenario** / **wɜrst keɪs sɪˈneər i ˌou** / (idiom) – the most serious or unpleasant result of a situation
Example: We should always be prepared for the **worst-case scenario**.

Article

Read the text below.

A court recently ordered coffee businesses in California to put signs in shops or on labels to warn customers about coffee’s link to cancer.

In 2010, the Council for Education and Research on Toxics (CERT) filed a lawsuit against coffee companies, demanding that they inform their customers about a dangerous chemical in coffee products. This chemical is known to cause cancer and is produced when coffee beans are roasted at a high temperature.

The judge who **presided** at the trial said that the coffee companies could not give enough and valid reasons not to put warnings inside their shops or on the labels of their products. Therefore, the court sided with the CERT, saying that the group provided **unequivocal** evidence that drinking coffee is harmful to people.

However, several studies **disprove** the CERT’s claims. Many researchers could not directly link drinking coffee to breast and prostate cancer. Even the World Health Organization’s cancer-specializing agency removed coffee from its list of possible cancer-causing products. The agency also said that drinking coffee actually has health benefits and is even believed to reduce the risks for some types of cancer.

Just as many researchers oppose the CERT’s stand, many people disagree with the idea of putting cancer warning signs in coffee shops or on products. Several critics believe that having warning signs may not work. For instance, a professor studying the impact of mass media campaigns said that people will most likely **disregard** the warning signs. According to another expert, the **worst-case scenario** is that the cancer warning signs will cause unnecessary alarm among consumers.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Do you think it is necessary to put cancer warning signs on labels of coffee products? Why or why not?

- How do you think coffee lovers will react to cancer warning signs on their drink?

Discussion B

- When buying products, do you usually consider any warning on their labels? Why or why not?

- What can authorities do to make warning labels on products more effective?