

You've probably heard a lot of mixed things about coffee—it's bad, it's good, it doesn't do anything—but the bulk of the evidence says drinking joe is good for you. Cardiologists think some of the health benefits may come from the antioxidants in coffee, like polyphenols, but it's been difficult to link the effects to any specific compound. The polyphenolic antioxidants seem to improve insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism. Insulin is how your body tames spiking blood glucose levels, and when the system gets out of whack you can develop larger metabolic problems like type two diabetes.

Most of the reassurance that coffee is part of a healthy diet comes from observational studies, where researchers ask a large number of people to describe their eating and coffee drinking habits, and then find associations between consuming coffee and heart health. Those studies have found that drinking somewhere around three to five cups a day reduces your overall risk of death as well as your risk of cardiovascular disease. Java also doesn't seem to have any significant impact on arrhythmias, hypertension, blood lipid levels, or cholesterol, but it does decrease your risk of developing type two diabetes.

All that being said, the thing that's not healthy about many Americans' coffee habits is the sugar. Coffee-flavored drinks, or simple drip coffee with tons of sugar added, are counterproductive. The sugar and calories in them work against the heart-healthy black coffee, so try to drink your morning cup with as few adulterating other ingredients as possible.