

9 Impressive Benefits of Cold-Brew Coffee (Plus How to Make It)

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Cold brew coffee has gained popularity among coffee drinkers in recent years.

Instead of using hot water to draw out the flavor and caffeine of coffee beans, cold brew coffee relies on time by steeping them in cold water for 12–24 hours.

This method makes the drink less bitter than hot coffee.

Though most research on the health benefits of coffee uses hot brew, cold brew is thought to offer many similar effects.

Here are 9 impressive health benefits of cold brew coffee.

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1. May boost your metabolism

Metabolism is the process by which your body uses food to create energy.

The higher your metabolic rate, the more calories you burn at rest.

Just like hot coffee, cold brew coffee contains caffeine, which has been shown to increase your resting metabolic rate by up to 11% (1, 2).

Caffeine appears to boost metabolic rate by increasing how quickly your body burns fat.

In a study in 8 men, ingesting caffeine led to a 13% increase in calorie burning, as well as a 2-fold increase in fat burning — much greater effects than they experienced after taking a placebo or beta-blocker (medication for blood pressure and circulation) (3).

Summary The caffeine in cold brew coffee can increase how many calories you burn at rest. This may make it easier to lose or maintain weight.

2. May lift your mood

The caffeine in cold brew coffee may improve your state of mind.

Caffeine consumption has been shown to enhance mood, especially among sleep-deprived individuals (4).

A review of studies in over 370,000 people found that those who drank coffee had lower rates of depression. In fact, for every cup of coffee consumed per day, depression risk sank by 8% (5).

Some research even suggests that caffeine could be used as a nutritional supplement to boost mood and brain function in older adults.

In a study in 12 adults ages 63–74, taking 1.4 mg of caffeine per pound (3 mg per kg) of body weight improved mood by 17%. This amount of caffeine is equivalent to around two cups of coffee for the average-sized person (6, 7).

Caffeine also improved their ability to react to an object moving toward them, indicating that it increases focus and attentiveness (6).

Summary Drinking cold brew coffee may boost your mood, reduce your risk of depression, and improve brain function.

3. May lower your risk of heart disease

Heart disease is a general term for several conditions that can affect your heart, including coronary artery disease, heart attack, and stroke. It's the number one cause of death worldwide (8).

Cold brew coffee contains compounds that may reduce your risk of heart disease, including caffeine, phenolic compounds, magnesium, trigonelline, quinides, and lignans. These increase insulin sensitivity, stabilize blood sugar, and lower blood pressure (9, 10).

The drink also contains chlorogenic acids (CGAs) and diterpenes, which act as antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents (11, 12).

Drinking 3–5 cups of coffee (15–25 ounces or 450–750 ml) daily may lower your risk of heart disease by up to 15%, compared to people who don't drink coffee (9).

Evidence to suggest that drinking more than 3–5 cups per day increases heart disease risk is lacking, though this effect has not been studied in people who consume more than 600 mg of caffeine per day, the equivalent of about 6 cups of coffee (9, 10, 13).

That said, people with uncontrolled high blood pressure should avoid drinking caffeine regularly, as this may further elevate their levels (9).

Summary Regularly drinking cold brew coffee may improve your heart health. However, caffeine should be limited or avoided if you have uncontrolled high blood pressure.

4. May lower your risk of type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition in which your blood sugar levels are too high. If left untreated, it can lead to many serious health complications.

Cold brew coffee may reduce your risk of developing this disease. In fact, drinking at least 4–6 cups of coffee per day is associated with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes (14).

These benefits may be largely due to chlorogenic acids, which are powerful antioxidants in coffee (11).

Cold brew coffee may also regulate gut peptides, which are hormones in your digestive system that control and slow digestion, keeping your blood sugar stable (11, 15).

One study in over 36,900 people ages 45–74 found that those who drank at least 4 cups of coffee per day had a 30% lower risk of type 2 diabetes than individuals who didn't drink coffee daily (16).

A review of 3 large studies in more than 1 million people found that those who increased their coffee intake over 4 years had an 11% lower risk of type 2 diabetes, compared to a 17% higher risk in those who reduced their coffee intake by more than 1 cup per day (17).

Summary Regularly drinking cold brew coffee may help keep your blood sugar stable and reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes.

5. May reduce your risk of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease

In addition to increasing your attentiveness and mood, cold brew coffee may benefit your brain in other ways.

Caffeine stimulates your nervous system and may affect how your brain functions.

One recent study observed that drinking coffee can protect your brain from age-related diseases (18).

Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases are neurodegenerative conditions, which means they are caused by brain cell death that occurs over time. Both illnesses can result in dementia, a decline in mental health that makes daily activities difficult.

Alzheimer's disease is marked by significant memory impairment, while Parkinson's often causes physical tremors and stiffness (19).

One observational study found that people who drank 3–5 cups of coffee per day during mid-life had a 65% lower risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer’s in old age (20).

Another observational study noted that coffee drinkers have a lower risk of Parkinson’s disease. In fact, men who drink more than four cups of coffee per day are five times less likely to develop this condition (21, 22).

It appears that several compounds in coffee, such as phenylindanes, as well as harman and nonharman compounds, provide protection against Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease (18, 23, 24, 25).

Keep in mind that decaffeinated coffee doesn’t appear to offer the same protective benefits as caffeinated varieties (22).

Summary Cold brew coffee contains compounds called phenylindanes, as well as lower amounts of nonharman and harman compounds. These can help protect your brain from age-related diseases.

6. May be easier on your stomach than hot coffee

Many people avoid coffee because it’s an acidic beverage that may stimulate acid reflux.

Acid reflux is a condition in which stomach acid frequently flows from your stomach back into your esophagus, causing irritation (26).

The acidity of coffee also tends to be blamed for other ailments, such as indigestion and heartburn.

The pH scale measures how acidic or alkaline a solution is from 0 to 14, with 7 being neutral, lower numbers more acidic, and higher numbers more alkaline.

Cold brew and hot coffee generally have similar acidity levels, around 5–6 on the pH scale, though this can vary depending on individual brews.

Still, some studies have found cold brew to be slightly less acidic, which means it may irritate your stomach less (27, 28).

Another reason why this beverage may be less irritating than hot coffee is its content of crude polysaccharides.

These carbohydrates, or chains of sugar molecules, boost the immunity of your digestive system. This may decrease gut irritation and the bothersome effects of coffee’s acidity on your stomach (29).

Summary Cold brew coffee is only slightly less acidic than hot coffee but contains compounds that may protect your stomach from this acidity. As such, it may cause fewer unpleasant digestive and acid reflux symptoms than hot coffee.

7. May help you live longer

Drinking cold brew coffee may reduce your overall risk of death, as well as dying from disease-specific causes (30, 31, 32).

A long-term study in 229,119 men and 173,141 women ages 50–71 found that the more coffee people drank, the lower their risk of death from heart disease, respiratory disease, stroke, injuries, accidents, diabetes, and infections (31).

One reason for this association may be that coffee is high in antioxidants.

Antioxidants are compounds that help prevent cell damage that can lead to chronic illnesses like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. These conditions can significantly reduce your lifespan.

Coffee contains powerful antioxidants like polyphenols, hydroxycinnamates, and chlorogenic acid (28, 33, 34).

Though studies show that hot coffee contains more total antioxidants than cold brew varieties, the latter packs some very potent antioxidants, such as caffeoylquinic acid (CQA) (27, 35).

Summary Though cold brew coffee contains fewer total antioxidants than hot coffee, it's full of compounds that have high antioxidant activity. Antioxidants help prevent diseases that can reduce your lifespan.

8. Similar caffeine content to hot coffee

Cold brew coffee is made as a concentrate that's meant to be diluted with water, usually in a 1:1 ratio.

The concentrate is incredibly strong on its own. In fact, undiluted, it provides about 200 mg of caffeine per cup.

However, diluting the concentrate — as is customary — reduces the caffeine content of the final product, bringing it closer to that of regular coffee.

Though caffeine content can vary depending on the brewing method, the difference in caffeine content between hot coffee and cold brew is insignificant (36).

The average cup of hot coffee contains around 95 mg of caffeine, compared to about 100 mg for a typical cold brew.

Summary Cold brew and hot coffee contain similar amounts of caffeine. However, if you drank cold brew coffee concentrate without diluting it, it would provide about twice the caffeine.

9. Very easy to make

You can easily make cold brew coffee at home.

1. First, purchase whole roasted coffee beans locally or online and coarsely grind them.
2. Add 8 ounces (226 grams) of grounds to a large jar and gently stir in 2 cups (480 ml) of water.
3. Cover the jar and let the coffee steep in the refrigerator for 12–24 hours.
4. Place cheesecloth into a fine mesh strainer and pour the steeped coffee through it into another jar.
5. Discard the solids that collect on the cheesecloth or save them for other creative uses. The liquid that remains is your cold brew coffee concentrate.

Cover the jar with an airtight lid and store your concentrate in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

When you're ready to drink it, add 1/2 cup (120 ml) of cold water to 1/2 cup (120 ml) of cold brew coffee concentrate. Pour this over ice and add cream if desired.

Summary Though it takes significantly longer to prepare than hot coffee, cold brew coffee is very easy to make at home. Mix coarsely ground coffee beans with cold water, let steep for 12–24 hours, strain, and then dilute the concentrate with water at a 1:1 ratio.

The bottom line

Cold brew coffee is an enjoyable alternative to hot coffee that you can easily make at home.

It offers many of the same health benefits but is less acidic and less bitter, which may make it more easily tolerated by sensitive individuals.

If you want to mix up your coffee routine, give cold brew coffee a try and see how it compares to your usual hot cup of joe.