

# Aging Well with a Cup of Joe

That steaming cup of coffee in your hands may hold the keys to a long, healthy life, scientists say.

Researchers at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) report that older people who drink coffee are less likely to die from heart disease, stroke, diabetes and respiratory disease than their non-java drinking counterparts.

The study followed 400,000 men and women between the ages of 50 to 71 beginning in 1995 and continued until 2008 or when the participant died. Scientists found the connection between reductions in risk factors increased with how much coffee was consumed. Whether the coffee was caffeinated or not didn't seem to matter.

People who drank at least three cups a day lowered their risk of death by 10 percent compared to non-coffee drinkers. Exactly why coffee seems to help prevent these diseases isn't clear yet, researchers said.

If some are looking to the steaming black beverage to be a fountain-of-youth, health experts say living to a ripe old age and free of disease requires a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables, regular exercise, reducing stress not to mention having good genes.

Maybe one of the reasons that drinking coffee seems to be good for you is that it is a social beverage. When we want to meet up with others, we often do it over a cup of coffee. In our congregations, we may have "coffee hour" after services—a time to meet and connect with others.

We know that being in positive relationships with others is key to good health. So call a friend and enjoy some coffee and a good chat. It's good for you!

*Prayer: Thank God for coffee!*



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# Exercise Improves Memory!



New research indicates that exercise is key to mental health for older adults who are striving to remain independent and active.

Older adults who walk or jog perform better on memory tasks than those who are more sedentary, according to researchers from Boston University. The research showed that older adults who took more steps per day had better memory performance, while no change was reported in the young adult group. Researchers concluded that the effects of physical activity extend to long-term memory.

"Americans are living longer more than ever before," says Sue Durkin, geriatric advanced practice nurse at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove, Ill. "This means that we need to take a more proactive role in our health, from eating nutritious meals and exercising regularly to stimulating our cognitive skills.

To maintain and improve cognitive skills in older adults, Durkin suggests engaging in interactive conversations, learning a new hobby or craft, playing games and solving puzzles.

It's always easier to exercise with others. Some congregations have walking clubs or offer the use of the building for older adults to walk in during cold or rainy weather. Some hold Zumba or yoga classes or exercise to religious music. What can your congregation do to help your members stay active?

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