

Coffee and Women's Health

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **Habit** (noun) /'hæbɪt/: A thing that you do often and regularly, almost without thinking about it.
Example: Drinking water every morning is a good **habit**.
2. **Caffeinated** (adjective) /'kæfneɪtɪd/: Containing caffeine.
Example: She prefers **caffeinated** drinks to stay awake.
3. **Chronic** (adjective) /'krɒnɪk/: (Of a disease or illness) lasting for a long time.
Example: Diabetes is a **chronic** disease.
4. **Cognitive** (adjective) /'kɒgnətɪv/: Connected with mental processes of understanding.
Example: Memory problems can be a sign of **cognitive** decline.
5. **Criteria** (noun) /kraɪ'tɪəriə/: A principle or standard by which something may be judged or decided.
Example: You must meet all the **criteria** to pass the exam.



Great news if you can't start your day without a cup of coffee — your habit might be helping you live well for longer, at least if you're a woman. A recently shared study looked at data from almost 50,000 women. It found that women who drank caffeinated coffee in midlife were more likely to show signs of healthy aging.

The study was based on data collected since 1984. The researchers looked at questionnaires that asked how often participants had caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea and cola, as well as decaffeinated coffee. "Healthy aging" was defined in the study as living to age 70 or older, being free from 11 chronic diseases, staying physically fit, having good mental health, and showing no signs of cognitive issues or memory problems.

Following the data for 30 years, the researchers estimated how the women's chances of healthy aging changed with every 80 milligrams of caffeine they had per day. The researchers also took into account other things that can affect health, like body weight, smoking, alcohol use, diet, exercise, and even education level.

By 2016, around 3,700 women in the study had met all the criteria for healthy aging. From ages 45 to 60, these women had an average of 315 milligrams of caffeine per day. That's about as much caffeine as you get from three small cups of coffee. The researchers also noted that 80% of that caffeine did indeed come from drinking regular, caffeinated coffee. Things looked even better for women who drank more coffee. There was a 2% to 5% increased chance of doing well later in life per extra cup for those who drank up to five cups of coffee a day. The same links with healthy aging weren't found with drinking decaffeinated coffee or tea — and the researchers also noted that, despite containing caffeine, drinking more cola was associated with a lower chance of healthy aging.

DISCUSSION

1. If your favorite coffee cup could talk, what wise advice do you think it would give you about healthy aging, based on all the coffee it has seen people drink?
2. Imagine a "Healthy Aging Superpower." If coffee gave you one, what would it be (e.g., super memory, unbreakable bones, endless energy for dancing), and how would you use it?
3. The study looked at caffeine from coffee, tea, and cola. If you had to choose one "healthy aging drink" that tasted amazing but was bright green and sparkly, what would it be called and what would it taste like?
4. If you woke up tomorrow and found your cat (or a pet, or a favorite toy) suddenly loved coffee and started showing signs of "healthy aging," what funny or surprising things would it start doing?
5. If "healthy aging" had a theme song, what kind of music would it be, and what would be one funny line from the lyrics that mentions coffee?
6. The study considers diet and exercise. If coffee could magically make you love one healthy food or one type of exercise, what would you choose for it to do, and why?
7. If you could design a new "coffee-flavored" non-coffee item (like coffee-flavored socks or a coffee-scented pillow), what would it be, and how would it help you feel good?
8. Imagine a "Future Coffee Shop" where all the drinks are specially brewed for healthy aging. What is one crazy, imaginative coffee drink on their menu, and what "healthy aging" benefit does it promise?
9. If scientists discovered that smelling coffee (not drinking it) also helped healthy aging, what new coffee-smelling products would suddenly become popular?
10. If you could send a message to your "future self" (when you're 70 or older) based on this coffee study, what would you say, and what's one funny question you'd ask your future self about their coffee habits?