

Q 1: Is caffeine the active coffee component in influencing liver function?

A: For the majority of the effects, the answer is no. However, caffeine does have a role, but there are other more active substances such as cafestol and kahweol

Q2: I have heard that coffee consumption can increase blood cholesterol levels. Is there any contradiction between the positive effects reported and cholesterol elevation?

A: Some scientific papers have reported a modest elevation of cholesterol due to the presence of cafestol and kahweol. This happens when cafestol and kahweol are consumed in relatively high quantities, mainly coffees prepared by boiling coffee grinds with water as opposed to more conventional methods of preparation e.g. filter, soluble, espresso etc.

Q3: Does drinking coffee permit drinking more alcohol without the risk of developing cirrhosis?

A: No, excessive alcohol consumption is never advised. Even when scientific evidence exist that coffee may have beneficial effects on liver functions, alcohol consumption can present other serious risks. These risks are not counterbalanced by coffee consumption.

Q4: I have heard that the effects of alcohol can be different for women than for men. Is coffee effect different according to gender?

A: There is no evidence that coffee acts on women in a different way than on men. This is based on data from some large epidemiological studies that involved men and similar numbers of women.

Q5: How many cups of coffee should I drink to assist my liver function?

A: According to the results of epidemiological studies the degree of protection varies according to the number of cups consumed daily. In the majority of the studies, a statistically significant result is obtained for 3 or 4 cups a day, which represents an average and safe level of consumption. Research is ongoing to elucidate the mechanisms of action

Q6: Is daily coffee consumption a key factor in generating a positive effect on liver functions?

A: The reported positive effects are based mainly on results obtained from epidemiological data. These studies take into account the consumption as reported by the participants, and significant results are obtained for a daily consumption of 3 to 4 cups.

Q7: Are effects similar when drinking espresso, filter, or instant coffees?

A: Studies have not differentiated between various types of coffee preparation. There is no reason to suppose that these effects on liver function will be different in any way.

Q8: Are the effects of decaffeinated coffee as beneficial as those of regular?

A: No studies have been undertaken specifically using decaffeinated coffee.

Q9: I usually drink my coffee with milk and sugar. Can I also benefit from the effects reported for black coffee?

A: There is no evidence from studies to indicate that the addition of milk and/or sugar or their absence, affects the benefits noted.