

Study links coffee intake with reduced risk of endometrial cancer

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Endometrial cancer is the most common cancer of the female reproductive organs in the US, affecting around 1 in 37 women in their lifetime. But in a new study, researchers found that drinking three to four cups of coffee a day could reduce the risk of endometrial cancer by almost a fifth.

Women who drink three or four cups of coffee a day may reduce their risk of endometrial cancer "by almost a fifth."

Endometrial [cancer](#) is a cancer that begins in the lining of the uterus, called the endometrium. The disease is rare in women under the age of 45, with around 3 in 4 cases in the US diagnosed in women aged 55 and over.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), around 54,870 women will be diagnosed with endometrial cancer or uterine [sarcomas](#) this year, and 10,170 will die from the conditions.



Though it is unclear exactly what causes endometrial cancer, past studies claim hormonal imbalances, [diabetes](#), [obesity](#) and an unhealthy diet are some important risk factors.

In this latest study - published in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* - Melissa A. Merritt, PhD, of Imperial College London in the UK, and colleagues set out to investigate how dietary factors affect the risk of endometrial cancer.

Three to four cups of coffee daily reduced endometrial cancer risk by up to 19%

The team analyzed 1,303 women with endometrial cancer who were a part of the European Prospective Investigation Into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) Study. The women completed dietary questionnaires, and the researchers assessed the link between 84 foods and nutrients consumed and the risk of endometrial cancer.

Fast facts about endometrial cancer

- Endometrial cancer is slightly more common in white women, but black women are more likely to die from the condition
- Women who are overweight or obese are 3.5 times more likely to develop endometrial cancer than those of a normal weight
- More than 600,000 women in the US are survivors of endometrial cancer.

[Learn more about endometrial cancer](#)

From this, the team identified nine foods and nutrients that could be associated with risk of endometrial cancer: total fat, monounsaturated fat, phosphorus, [carbohydrates](#), yogurt, butter, potatoes, cheese and [coffee](#).

Next, the researchers analyzed 1,531 women with endometrial cancer who were a part of the Nurses' Health Study (NHS) or Nurses' Health Study II (NHSII). These women also completed dietary questionnaires.

To validate their findings from the EPIC cohort, the team assessed the association between consumption of the nine foods and nutrients and risk of endometrial cancer in the NHS/NHSII cohorts.

The researchers found that drinking three cups of coffee a day reduced endometrial cancer risk by 19% among women in the EPIC study, compared with women who drank less than one cup of coffee a day. Among women in the NHS/NHSII cohorts, drinking four cups of coffee a day reduced the risk of endometrial cancer by 18%, compared with those who never drank coffee.

In the EPIC study, the team linked total fat, monounsaturated fat and phosphorus intake with reduced risk of endometrial cancer, while butter and carbohydrates were associated with increased risk. These findings are deemed insignificant, however, as the researchers were unable to validate them in the NHS/NHSII cohorts.

The team says past research has suggested a link between higher coffee intake and lower risk of endometrial cancer, and that their study - funded by the National Institutes of Health - provides further evidence for this association. Merritt adds:

"Coffee intake is worth investigating further to see if coffee can be used for the prevention of endometrial cancer.

However, before clinical recommendations can be made, further studies are needed to evaluate this question in other studies and to try to isolate the components of coffee that may be responsible for any influence on endometrial cancer."

Coffee consumption may not only be beneficial for endometrial cancer. Last month, *Medical News Today* reported on a study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, in which researchers suggested drinking four cups of coffee a day could [reduce the risk of melanoma skin cancer](#).

And in April 2014, we reported on a study by researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, MA, who claimed increased coffee consumption could [lower the risk of type 2 diabetes](#).

Our Knowledge Center article - "[What are the health benefits of coffee?](#)" - reveals some of the other ways coffee may be good for us, but also highlights some of the risks associated with coffee consumption.

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American Association for Cancer Research news release, accessed 4 February 2015.

Additional source: American Cancer Society, [key statistics for endometrial cancer](#), accessed 4 February 2015.

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