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Healthy Brew

Health Benefits of Caffeine, Caffeinated Products

The second annual **HealthSaver Caffeinated Cities Survey**, commissioned by HealthSaver, a national emerging health care discount service, found that the most caffeinated city in the country is Tampa, followed by Seattle, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles.

The least caffeinated cities are Riverside/San Bernardino, followed closely by Atlanta, San Diego, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Dallas. The survey considered numerous caffeine sources, including coffee, tea, sodas, energy drinks, chocolate, pain relievers and caffeine pills.

Considering caffeinated coffee consumption alone, it was no surprise that Seattle ranked No. 1 nationwide for the second consecutive year.

The **HealthSaver 2008 Caffeinated Cities Survey** was conducted to determine the caffeine consumption habits and attitudes of consumers across the U.S., and to learn more about cultural views and health benefits of this morning pick-me-up, afternoon alert booster and late-night indulgence.

Health benefits of caffeine and caffeinated products such as coffee, tea, sodas, energy drinks, chocolate, pain relievers and caffeine pills:

- Coffee, that beloved beverage, can **lower your risk of diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, and colon cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, lift your mood, treat headaches** ... and **even lower your risk of cavities**, according to studies on caffeine and health.
- **Coffee provides more healthful antioxidants than any other food or beverage in the American diet**, according to a University of Scranton study that analyzed the antioxidant content of more than 100 different food items, including vegetables, fruits, nuts, spices, oils and common beverages.
- The study concluded that the **average adult consumes 1,299 milligrams of antioxidants daily from coffee**, followed by tea (294 milligrams), bananas (76 milligrams), dry beans (72 milligrams) and corn (48 milligrams). According to the Agriculture Department, the typical adult American drinks 1.64 cups of coffee daily.
- In recent decades, **some 19,000 studies have been done examining coffee's impact on health**. And for the most part, their results are as pleasing as a gulp of freshly brewed Breakfast Blend for the 108 million Americans who routinely enjoy this traditionally morning – and increasingly daylong – ritual. In practical terms, regular coffee drinkers include the majority of U.S. adults and a growing number of children.

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"Overall, the research shows that coffee is far more healthful than it is harmful," says Tomas DePaulis, PhD, research scientist at Vanderbilt University's Institute for Coffee Studies, which conducts its own medical research and tracks coffee studies from around the world. "For most people, very little bad comes from drinking it, but a lot of good."

- At least six studies indicate that people who drink coffee on a regular basis are up to **80 percent less likely to develop Parkinson's**, with three showing the more they drink, **the lower the risk**. Other research shows that compared to not drinking coffee, **at least two cups daily can translate to a 25 percent reduced risk of colon cancer, an 80 percent drop in liver cirrhosis risk, and nearly half the risk of gallstones**.
- **Coffee even offsets some of the damage caused by other vices**, some research indicates. People **who smoke** and are **heavy drinkers have less heart disease and liver damage when they regularly consume large amounts of coffee compared to those who don't**, according to the Institute for Coffee Studies.
- There's also evidence that coffee may **help manage asthma** and even control attacks when medication is unavailable, **stop a headache, boost mood, and even prevent cavities**.
- Some of coffee's reported benefits are a direct result of its higher caffeine content: An eight ounce cup of drip-brewed coffee contains about 85 mg – about three and a half times more than the same serving of tea or cola or one ounce of chocolate.
- Caffeine also **helps in treating asthma and headaches**. Though not widely publicized, a single dose of pain reliever such as Anacin or Excedrin contains up to 120 milligrams – what's in a hefty mug o' Joe, according to health experts.
- **It's also caffeine** – and not coffee, per se – that makes java a **powerful aid in enhancing athletic endurance and performance**, says physiologists and coffee researchers. So powerful, in fact, that until recently, caffeine in coffee or other forms was deemed a "controlled" substance by the Olympic Games Committee, meaning that it could be consumed only in small, designated amounts by competing athletes.
- **Caffeine stimulates the brain and nervous system** – and **even the muscles themselves**, causing them to produce a stronger contraction.
- **People who eat chocolate up to three times a month live almost a year longer** than those who eat too much or those who steer clear of junk food altogether, according to researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health.

About HealthSaver

HealthSaver offers discounts of 20 percent on vision care, as well as discounts of 10 to 50 percent on prescriptions at participating pharmacies, 20 percent off complementary and alternative health care treatments and fitness club benefits. HealthSaver also offers

discounts of 10 to 35 percent on dental care services at some 42,000 participating provider locations nationwide, including routine cleanings, X-rays, fillings, orthodontics, and even popular cosmetic dentistry procedures such as teeth whitening. Members can also save from 5 to 50 percent off vitamins and supplements by mail. Discounts are based upon reasonable and customary costs or manufacturers suggested retail price (MSRP) and are only available from participating providers. HealthSaver is not an insurance product or service. More information about HealthSaver is available online at www.healthsaver.com or toll free by calling 1-800-7HEALTH (1-800-743-2584). HealthSaver is offered by Affinion Group, a leader in the membership, insurance and loyalty marketing businesses, providing products and services that touch the lives of millions of Americans.

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