

# Does Drinking Coffee Lead You To Greater Risk of Heart Disease?

By drinking coffee or other caffeinated beverages throughout the day, you may be increasing the risk factors that cause heart disease. Here are the top 7 reasons that kicking the coffee habit can help you to decrease these risks for your heart's sake!

## 1. Coffee Drinking Increases Heart Attack Risk

Recent research shows that over half the population studied has a genetic variation that slows the metabolism of caffeine and increases the risk of heart attack. If people with these genes drink 2 cups of coffee a day, their risk of heart attack is increased by 32%. If they drink 4 or more cups a day, their heart attack risks increases to 64%. For people under the age of 59, the risk of heart attack associated with coffee drinking is even higher. One cup a day increases their risk of heart attack by 24%, two - three cups a day increases it 67% and the risk for four or more cups of coffee is increased by 133%! People who drank less than 1 cup of coffee a day did not show increased risk of heart attacks.

## 2. Caffeine Raises Blood Pressure

Drinking caffeinated beverages has been shown to significantly increase blood pressure. High blood pressure is a silent disease which can create devastating complications, including hardening of the arteries, kidney problems, poor eyesight, aneurysms (bulges in blood vessels), and heart attacks. By limiting your caffeine intake, you can make great progress towards lowering your blood pressure.

## 3. Coffee and Decaf Increase Cholesterol Levels

Both regular and decaffeinated coffees are linked to higher levels of cholesterol. Decaf coffee has been shown to raise the LDL cholesterol or so called "bad" cholesterol 8-10% in 3 months. Drinking unfiltered coffee like espresso beverages and coffee brewed in the French press has been shown to raise cholesterol compared to drinking drip coffee. If you have high cholesterol, reducing coffee drinking should be part of the dietary changes you make to help lower your cholesterol.

## 4. Coffee Raises Homocysteine Levels

Homocysteine is an amino acid associated with increased risk of heart attack. Studies show that drinking both regular and decaffeinated coffee significantly increases homocysteine in the bloodstream, even more so than caffeine alone. This increase in homocysteine is noted within hours of coffee consumption. Quitting coffee can be an important step in reducing elevated homocysteine.

## 5. Coffee Drinking Increases Inflammation

Inflammation of the artery walls is an important risk factor for heart attacks that doctors now think may be even more significant than cholesterol levels. Studies suggest that coffee drinkers have a higher rate of inflammation and this effect has been shown with drinking just 6 ounces (3/4 cup) of coffee per day! Inflammation may lead to other chronic diseases too. You can start decreasing inflammation today by limiting your coffee intake.

#### **6. Caffeine Increases Blood Vessel Stiffness**

Arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, is a contributing factor to heart disease and high blood pressure. Studies show that drinking caffeinated beverages is linked to greater stiffness of the artery walls. Limit your caffeine intake and you'll limit your risk of arteriosclerosis.

#### **7. Coffee Elevates Stress Hormones**

Stress is one of the leading risk factors for heart attacks. Caffeine, specifically in coffee, has been shown to elevate stress hormones including cortisol. These hormones are responsible for increased heart rate and blood pressure, and a sense of "emergency alert". Caffeine consumption can put you in a continual state of increased stress that can chronically increase blood pressure and affect normal heart rate and rhythm. Your immune system is also weakened when stress hormones are high. It's hard enough to get a handle on our daily stress without unnecessarily contributing to it. Decreasing caffeine and coffee intake can go a long way towards managing your stress more effectively.