



Great news about coffee!

Coffee and Memory

Aren't we fortunate that a beverage so delicious can be good for us in so many ways?

We're told by scientists that it looks like coffee can offer protection against type 2 diabetes,¹ liver disease,² Parkinson's disease,³ some types of cancer³ – and even dehydration.⁴ We always knew our favorite brew kept us alert, but here's one more benefit: studies have shown that coffee actually may enhance memory.⁵ And they've actually *seen* it work!

Florian Koppelstatter, M.D., Ph.D., of the University Hospital in Innsbruck, Austria, used a scanning technique called functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to study 15 healthy men aged 26-47. As the name of the procedure implies, subjects can perform different functions during this type of MRI. The subjects completed tasks involving memory during two scans. For example, for one task they were asked to recall a group of letters that they had been shown 20 minutes earlier.

The resulting scans showed “significant activity” in two parts of the brain – the part where the working memory is located as well as in the area that controls attention. “This effect takes part in the distinct part of the working memory network that controls attention and concentration,” the scientist said. This is the type of memory we use for test-taking, for example. According to Dr. Koppelstatter, caffeine seemed to help brain function more than his group had expected. He said the scans showed that caffeine has a substantial impact on the processing of short-term memory. Subjects also showed improvement in reaction times.

So before you sit down to write that report or run off to take that exam, you might want to consider relaxing with a steaming mug of coffee. That memory boost might be just what you need!

For flavorful and healthful food creations, try the coffee recipes available at www.coffeescience.org.

¹Coffee, Caffeine, and Risk of Type 2 Diabetes: A prospective cohort study. *Diabetes Care*: 2006.

²Influence of Coffee Drinking on Subsequent Risk of Hepatocellular Carcinoma: A Prospective Study in Japan. *J Natl Cancer Inst*: 2005.

³Coffee and health: a review of recent human research. *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr*: 2006.

⁴Fluid, electrolyte, and renal indices of hydration during 11 days of controlled caffeine consumption. *Int J Sport Nutr*. 2005.

⁵Influence of Caffeine Excess on Activation Patterns in Verbal Working Memory. *Radiological Society of North America*: 2005.

