

[IMAGE]

Coffee Reduces Arrhythmia Risk?

By Editorial Staff

OK, let's start with the obvious: What's an *arrhythmia* and why should you be reducing your risk of suffering one? For the answers, let's think about arguably the most important organ in your body: the heart. Electrical rhythms coordinate each and every beat of your heart. When those rhythms are disrupted, your heart beats differently than "usual" – too slow, too fast or irregularly. Sometimes, arrhythmias are harmless; but sometimes, they can be life-threatening.

If your heart beats too fast, you're experiencing *tachycardia* - a resting heart rate that exceeds 100 beats per minute. If your heart beats too slow, you're experiencing *bradycardia* - a resting heart rate below 60 beats per minute. Keep in mind that exercise, sleep and other variables can affect your heart rate at any given time, so experiencing tachycardia or bradycardia doesn't necessarily signal a health issue.

However, arrhythmias – particularly recurrent arrhythmias – may be a sign you have heart disease or another heart issue. You also may be more likely to experience symptoms such as lightheadedness / dizziness, chest pain, shortness of breath, etc. Depending on the circumstance, these symptoms could pose major problems.

Now here's the good news: drinking coffee appears to reduce arrhythmia risk, particularly the risk of experiencing tachycardia. In fact, according to research involving nearly 400,000 participants, "each additional daily cup of coffee was associated with a 3% reduced risk of developing an arrhythmia." These findings are important because up until now, coffee (caffeine) intake has generally been regarded as *increasing* the risk of experiencing arrhythmia. According to the study authors, writing on their findings in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, "These data suggest that common prohibitions against caffeine to reduce arrhythmia risk are likely unwarranted." Food for thought – and worthy of a discussion with your doctor.

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