



# EAT RIGHT *With* ROUSES

by Esther, Rouses Dietitian

**A**s teenagers in high school, my best friend, Katie, and I were obsessed with coffeehouses. There was a CC's on our route to Baton Rouge High, and some days we would stop on the way there *and* back. We always ordered Super Grande White Chocolate and Caramel Mochasipi, frothy espresso drinks that we downed in minutes. It makes me cringe to think I was slurping down an extra 500 calories and 72 grams of added sugar with every cup.

I wish I still had the metabolism of a teenager. Today when Katie and I get together, we still usually go for coffee, but now we're ordering iced coffees instead.

In the 2016 February-March issue of *My Rouses Everyday* magazine, I wrote about coffee finally being addressed in the newest Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The guidelines state that moderate coffee consumption, about three to five cups a day, can be incorporated into a healthy eating pattern.

In addition to prolonging your morning energy, that beloved cup of joe could mean a longer life. Several studies have shown a lower risk of mortality with each cup of coffee, up to about four cups. Coffee may also reduce the risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease, especially in women. Researchers at Harvard found that three to five cups of coffee a day provided the most protection against cardiovascular disease.

Coffee drinking has long been associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. Individuals who drink six cups a day may have as much as a 35% reduced risk of developing the disease. Fortunately, decaf drinkers enjoy the same reduced risk.

Coffee may help prevent certain types of cancer, including liver, prostate, breast and lung cancer. In addition to protecting against liver cancer, it may also protect against liver disease. Researchers have suggested that drinking two or more cups a day can reduce liver disease risks by as much as 66%. Furthermore, coffee consumption is linked to many brain benefits. An increase in consumption has shown lower risks for depression, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.

While the suspected benefits are promising, remember that what you add to your cup can make a difference. Black coffee is best — a typical cup contains only two to five calories. When it comes to milk and creamers I usually recommend the classics, starting with low-fat milk. If low-fat milk doesn't suit your fancy, try whole milk or regular half-and-half, but keep in mind that a tablespoon of half-and-half adds 20 calories and a tablespoon of whole milk adds about 10 calories. While that doesn't sound like much, if you drink five cups a day, that's an extra 50-100 calories.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting your added sugar intake to five teaspoons, or 25 grams a day. Because of this I recommend trying a zero-calorie sweetener such as Stevia or Swerve Sweetener, or even vanilla extract. This will give you some sweetness without the extra sugar.

Whatever way you like it, you can drink coffee knowing you may be doing something good for your health; just lay low on the Mochasippis, please. ■