Coffee Could Protect Against Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

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Consuming coffee, even decaf, could protect against non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), according to a mouse study. Italian researchers studied three groups of mice over a 12-week period: One group received a standard diet, the second a high-fat diet and the third a high-fat diet along with a decaffeinated coffee solution equivalent to six daily espressos per 150 pounds of human body weight.

Findings were presented at the 51st International Liver Congress in Barcelona.

Adding coffee to the high-fat diet significantly reversed levels of cholesterol, alanine aminotraferase (ALT, high levels of which indicate liver damage), the amount of fat in liver cells (steatosis) and ballooning degeneration (an indication of liver cell death). Consuming coffee also reduced weight gain among those that received the high-fat diet.

The study suggested that coffee protects against NAFLD by raising levels of a protein known as Zonulin-1, which reduces the permeability of the gut. Researchers believe that higher levels of gut permeability harm the liver and exacerbate NAFLD.

To read a press release about the study, click here.

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