

# Toxic Mold in Coffee?

Coffee is a lightning rod for conflicting medical studies. Every few weeks it seems, a new study comes out touting the benefits or risks of drinking coffee or drinking too much coffee – an amount which is also hotly debated.



(Photo courtesy of [Kari Shea](#) on [Unsplash](#))

According to BlueCross BlueShield, here's where the science stands regarding the pros and cons of coffee consumption:

## Pros

- Coffee may help protect against type 2 diabetes.

- Coffee may help reduce the risk of Parkinson's disease and may help control Parkinson's related tremors.
- Coffee lowers the risk of liver cancer and protects against cirrhosis of the liver.
- Moderate coffee consumption (16 ounces daily) can help protect against heart failure.

## **Cons**

- Drinking too much coffee/caffeine can trigger anxiety symptoms, especially in those with underlying anxiety disorders.
- Coffee/caffeine causes the release of adrenaline, which can lead to elevated heart rate and blood pressure.
- Coffee can inhibit proper sleep cycles in some people, and even cause headaches for other users.

The latest round of studies has introduced a new concern for coffee lovers – the level of mycotoxins in coffee. *Mycotoxins* are poisonous substances produced by fungi, including mold.

## ***Understanding the Threat***

You may have heard of or read about mycotoxins, but they are usually mentioned in the context of toxic molds that take residence in water damaged buildings. These molds produce a variety of mycotoxins that become airborne and, when inhaled, can cause serious health conditions in people who are sensitive to these toxins and/or are poorly equipped to eliminate the toxins from their bodies.

Mycotoxins are also found in various foods, including cereals, nuts, spices, dried fruits, and, yes, coffee beans. Molds that produce these mycotoxins grow on crops, especially under warm, humid conditions before or after harvest, in storage, or even

after processing. Roasting kills the molds, but mycotoxins are very stable compounds that remain intact even after roasting. Coffee producers may also use a technique called *wet processing*, which removes most of the molds and mycotoxins.

Of particular concern regarding coffee are the mycotoxins *Ochratoxin A* (OTA) and *Ochratoxin B* (OTB), which are produced by several species of *Aspergillus* and *Penicillium*. OTA is produced during storage and has a number of toxic effects, the most notable of which is kidney damage. It may also negatively affect fetal development and the immune system.

The problem is compounded by the fact that the U.S. has no standards for limiting OTA levels in coffee, so coffee merchants can sell beans on the U.S. market that test too high for OTA to sell into other markets around the world.

### ***Gauging Your Toxic Load***

Although the coffee you drink is likely to contain some mycotoxins and possibly even molds, you don't necessarily need to stop drinking coffee or start paying \$15 or more for a pound of *mycotoxin-free coffee* (yes, that's a real thing now). The real concern is your total *toxic load* – the level of toxins that build up in your body over time. Your toxic load is a factor of both your exposure to environmental toxins and your body's ability to eliminate those toxins.



Unfortunately, in today's world, we are exposed to more toxins than ever before. They are in the air we breathe, the food we eat, the beverages we drink, the cleaning products we use, the homes we live in, and even the clothes we wear. If our exposure to toxins exceeds our body's ability to eliminate those toxins, they build up in our bodies and can begin to cause serious, long-term health issues. For more information on the toxins we're now regularly exposed to here in Tampa, read our April 2019 article, [Diagnosing and Treating Environmentally Acquired Illness](#).

### ***Reducing Your Toxic Load***

Whether you are healthy and fit or not, it is always a good idea to reduce your toxic load. The first step is to reduce your exposure to toxins. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Have your home professionally inspected for mold and have any mold removed.
- Eat high-quality, fresh, organic food products.
- Avoid consuming processed foods and beverages.
- Drink filtered water.
- Use stainless steel or iron cookware.
- Avoid cooking in or eating or drinking from plastic containers, plates, bowls, or cups.
- Use natural cleaning products, including laundry products.
- Wear clothes made from natural products.
- If you must have clothes dry-cleaned, allow them to air out outside for a few hours before bringing them into your home.
- When shopping for new furniture, look for furniture with low volatile organic compound (VOC) ratings.
- When bringing new furniture, mattresses, or home furnishings into your home, open the windows to let them

air out for a few days.

- Use personal hygiene products in moderation and opt for natural products when you have a choice.

The next step is to get yourself evaluated and medically detoxed, if necessary. Do not try to detox on your own. Most do-it-yourself detox programs remove toxins from cells faster than the body can eliminate them, which can make you feel terrible and may even be dangerous. The [Tampa medical detox](#) we offer here at BioDesign Wellness gradually and safely eliminates toxins.

You should also be evaluated to determine whether you have certain genes that prevent your body from eliminating certain toxins on its own. Treatments are available to help the body compensate.

How do you know when to schedule an evaluation? In most cases, patients come to us after exhausting their options with conventional medical practitioners – when they feel bad and all other treatments have failed or when they have received a diagnosis such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, or depression with no hope for real relief. We hope you don't wait and suffer that long.

To schedule an evaluation, call our patient care coordinator, Lori, at (813) 445-7770.

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