



Coffee is emerging as the miracle product, especially if you are a mouse. The Costa Rica cash crop has been getting plaudits for years from medical researchers.

The most recent report says that the combined effect of caffeine and exercise may protect against skin cancer caused by sun exposure.

The Rutgers University study said that mice at high risk for developing skin cancer showed 62 percent fewer skin tumors when they were fed doses of caffeine, according to the American Association for Cancer Research, which is ending its annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois, today.

"I believe we may extrapolate these findings to humans and anticipate that we would benefit from these combination treatments as well," said Yao-Ping Lu, the principal researcher at the New Jersey University's pharmacy school.

Last year, researchers at the same university suggested that a sun screen containing caffeine might ward off dangerous rays.

Also last year a report in the, "The Journal of Physical Chemistry B of the American Chemical Society," said that caffeine seems to protect against Alzheimer's and heart disease. The report was based on the consumption of coffee and tea.

The society's Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry reported in 2010 that drinking coffee may cut the risk of Type Two diabetes, at least in mice.

A 2009 Indiana University found that caffeine can reduce exercise-induced asthma.

Other medical studies in 2007 report a reduced risk of liver.

Scientists say that coffee has far more antioxidants than many vegetables and fruits, according to a Harvard School of Public Health study. Drinking coffee also reduces body weight, according to another study.

In most cases, the studies were conducted on varieties of mice, but scientists believe that the results are applicable to humans. The uterine cancer study was based on a 26-year study of women, but the researchers noted that the coffee drinkers were not randomly selected and randomly assigned to test groups.

Costa Rica exports some 200,000 tons of coffee a year, and the **coffee grown here is believed to be higher in caffeine than crops elsewhere**

. Coffee is the country's third largest export.

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By A.M. Costa Rica