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COFFEE'S GREAT

Coffee's Great, U.S. Panel Says in Official Diet Recommendations 2015-02-19 18:00:01.0 GMT By Doni Bloomfield (Bloomberg) -- A couple of grandes a day may keep the doctor away, according to a panel of government-appointed scientists charged with proposing changes to U.S. dietary guidelines. Just go easy on the sugar. Three to five daily cups of coffee aren't associated with long-term health risks, the panel said in a report Thursday, and correlate with reduced risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes. The panel helps the U.S. government formulate dietary suggestions, guidelines that affect millions of American diets. "Coffee's good stuff," Tom Brenna, a member of the committee and a nutritionist at Cornell University, said in a telephone interview. "I don't want to get into implying coffee cures cancer -- nobody thinks that," he said. "But there is no evidence for increased risk, if anything, the other way around." The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, a nonpartisan panel of academics and scientists, gives suggestions to U.S. agencies including the Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture. Subsequent government guidelines influence federal food programs and local issues such as school lunches. Previous guidelines have not addressed caffeine's health effects. Along with the coffee recommendation, the panel said governments should consider taxes on sugary beverages and snacks, and that sugars added to processed foods should make up no more than 10 percent of all calories, down from the average 13 percent now consumed by U.S. adults. The panel also dropped a warning on cholesterol while recommending Americans eat less sodium, saturated fats and red meat. Research since the advisory body last met in 2010 was critical to the decision on coffee, Brenna said. "There's been a heck of a lot of work on coffee." The U.S. is the world's biggest consumer of coffee, according to the USDA. Last year, Americans who drink coffee consumed about 1.7 cups a day on average, up from 1.4 cups a decade ago, according to an estimate by Cedarhurst, New York- based researcher StudyLogic.