NCA Statement on CERT Lawsuit

Coffee does not increase the risk of cancer. In fact, coffee drinkers have a lower incidence than non-coffee drinkers of several of the most common cancer types, including cancer of the liver, prostate, breast, and colon.

More than 500 published, high quality peer-reviewed human studies, covering several million people, concluded that no connection exists between coffee and cancer.

In fact, studies instead show that coffee drinkers have lower rates of diabetes, Alzheimer’s Disease, dementia, Parkinson’s Disease, high blood pressure and overall mortality than non-coffee drinkers.

As such, the National Coffee Association’s member companies continue to aggressively defend against a lawsuit filed in 2011 by the California-based Council for Education and Research on Toxics (CERT). CERT, an organization founded by and located within the same office as lead counsel in this lawsuit, Raphael Metzger, seeks to place labeling on coffee falsely linking coffee consumption to cancer. The most up-to-date studies and scientific opinions directly support our member companies’ position. The public and the scientific community know more about coffee than virtually any food in the world.

CERT falsely asserts that because coffee contains trace levels of acrylamide, a substance naturally produced during the roasting process, that coffee manufacturers and retailers must warn consumers of an increased risk of cancer under California’s Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act (Proposition 65). This notion runs contrary to the scientific evidence.

Acrylamide forms in foods naturally as an unavoidable by-product of the browning process. Hundreds of foods that are part of a healthy diet contain acrylamide formed through cooking, including bread, cereals, and cooked vegetables. Although acrylamide manufactured in synthetic form has been associated with cancers in rodents fed massive doses, natural dietary acrylamide in minute amounts in foods like coffee does not have an effect on human beings.

Numerous large government-funded cohort studies have followed the eating habits and lifestyle factors of several million people to better understand the causes of disease. These studies provide researchers with an exceptionally rich body of knowledge about coffee. The newest studies, published in highly respected scientific journals, drive the growing consensus among epidemiologists that coffee does not increase the risk of any cancer type and reduces the risk of some forms of cancer.
That coffee is associated with a reduction in several forms of cancer is not surprising in light of the fact that coffee is a complex mixture full of antioxidants, compounds that are widely regarded as having anti-carcinogenic properties. To provide a sense of scale, a single cup of coffee contains about two parts per billion of acrylamide. The same cup of coffee contains as much as 675,000 parts per billion – over three hundred thousand times as much – of just one of several antioxidants in coffee.

The World Health Organization and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have extensively studied acrylamide in food and do not advise consumers to change their diets to avoid foods containing acrylamide. Notably, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) told readers of its News In Health pamphlet: “So go enjoy that cup of coffee. It’s not the guilty pleasure you may have thought,” and “I think we can say quite confidently that there’s no increased risk of cancer with coffee consumption.” [http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2009/August](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2009/August).

In addition, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, an arm of the World Health Organization (WHO), stated in June 2016 that “[m]any epidemiological studies showed that coffee drinking had no carcinogenic effects for cancers of the pancreas, female breast, and prostate, and reduced risks were seen for cancers of the liver and uterine endometrium.” [https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2016/pdfs/pr244_E.pdf](https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2016/pdfs/pr244_E.pdf) As such, IARC concluded that “[d]rinking coffee was not classifiable as to its carcinogenicity to humans ....”

For more information on acrylamide in food products, see the FDA website at [http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneillneddContaminants/ChemicalContaminants/ucm053549.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneillneddContaminants/ChemicalContaminants/ucm053549.htm).