day after the binge, it was found that the number of newly-formed cells was decreased by 57% when compared to the no-alcohol group. In animals killed one month after alcohol exposure "the number of newly-formed cells was decreased by 97%.” Researchers noted that “in most aspects of structure and function, the rat and human brain are quite similar.” When fed relatively high doses of alcohol, rats display behaviors that resemble those seen in drunken humans. The study findings suggest, therefore, “that high doses of alcohol negatively affect the formation of new brain cells” in humans, as well, according to researchers.

Of course, most people do not participate in 4-day benders. But the researchers have also completed research that suggests that just a few hours of drunkenness can trigger a significant reduction in neural cell formation, at least in rats.

DECAF COFFEE LINKED TO RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS RISK

Decaffeinated coffee may raise women’s risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis, according to the findings of two studies presented recently at the American College of Rheumatology’s annual meeting.

“We concluded that decaffeinated coffee consumption was an important yet modifiable risk factor in the development of rheumatoid arthritis,” writes lead author Dr. Ted R. Mikuls, an assistant professor at the

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where use makes a difference. Sexual exercise — either masturbating or having sex with a partner — will increase natural lubrication. Men, too, may find that arousal comes more easily when sexual activity is maintained regularly, although the normal sexual diminution that comes in their 70s and beyond may require some adjustment and variation. In other words, use it or lose it.

**Cold or flu?**

What's the difference between a cold and the flu? For a set of ailments that we've all had many times, there's a surprising amount we may not realize about them.

**Should you starve a fever and feed a cold?** You can treat both about the same. Make sure you are drinking fluids. In fact, drink more than usual. Avoid drinks that will rob your system of fluids, such as coffee, teas, and colas with caffeine. As for eating, use your appetite as a guideline. If you're not particularly hungry, try to eat some simple foods like white rice or broth. If you feel like eating a steak, go ahead!

**How effective are home remedies such as a hot toddy or chicken soup?** Like many cold remedies, a hot toddy or chicken soup might soothe your sore throat and help you sleep.

However, there's no proof that either will drive the virus out of your body.

**Can you catch cold by going out in the cold air or getting a chill?** No. You need to be exposed to the virus (usually in the form of respiratory droplets from someone near you) in order for you to contract it. It is possible that cold air can irritate an existing condition, such as asthma. This may make your body more receptive to the virus, but only if you come in contact with it.

**How effective are natural remedies such as zinc, echinacea, and vitamin C?** In some individuals, natural remedies and preventive measures seem to help. However, researchers have not proved that these things can prevent a cold or the flu, reduce symptoms, or rid a body of a virus.

University of Alabama at Birmingham. "Given the global popularity of coffee, our findings have potential public health implications."

The researchers followed more than 31,000 women aged 55 to 69 included in the Iowa Women's Health Study from 1986 through 1997. They tracked the 158 women who developed rheumatoid arthritis during that time period and compared them with women who did not develop the disease. In rheumatoid arthritis, the immune system attacks the lining of the joints, causing pain, stiffness and inflammation.

Women drinking four or more cups a day of decaffeinated coffee were at more than twice the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis, researchers found. However, women drinking regular coffee were not at increased risk, while those drinking more than three cups of tea had a 60% reduced risk of developing the disease. Even when researchers took into account other possible contributing factors, such as age, smoking history, marital status and the use of hormone replacement therapy, the association between drinking decaffeinated coffee and rheumatoid arthritis persisted.