

## TO CAF OR DECAF?



It's no secret coffee has become a cultural staple. The average American drinks 3.1 cups of coffee per day. We also have similar relationships with tea and cola drinks. It is estimated that 90% of all adults worldwide consume caffeine in some form as a part of their daily diet. Caffeine is the most consumed and socially acceptable stimulant in the world.

So what are the implications, if any? Benefits? These are the questions frequently raised during annual physical examinations.

Here are the facts...

- There are short-term benefits associated with drinking caffeinated beverages such as improved athletic performance and increased mental alertness.
- There are also short-term adverse effects to drinking caffeine including anxiety, tremors, headache, increasing heartburn and insomnia.
- There is a long-term association with caffeine use and generalized anxiety disorder and substance abuse disorders. Causality has not been shown.
- Long-term benefits that are associated with caffeinated beverages are a reduced risk of Parkinson disease, alcoholic cirrhosis, gout, and Alzheimer disease.
- Caffeine may raise blood pressure and cause irregular heart rates in susceptible individuals, although it is not considered a long-term risk factor for myocardial disease.
- Coffee specifically whether it contains caffeine or not is associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes.
- There is no definitive evidence linking coffee usage with an increased risk of various cancers.
- Daily caffeine users can experience a withdrawal syndrome 12-24 hours after their last dose. Symptoms include anxiety, depression, fatigue, and drowsiness which typically resolve in one to two days.
- There are some conflicting studies on caffeine intake and the risk of miscarriage in pregnant women. Some studies have shown increased risk at amounts above 200mg, others at 500mg.

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The final buzz...

- Based on current data there is not scientific evidence promoting or discouraging caffeine intake in the average daily diet.
- Until more is known, it is prudent to limit caffeine consumption during pregnancy to fewer to 200mg.
- Know how much caffeine (coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, supplements, and medications) you intake and be aware of how it makes you feel. It could be responsible or contributing to anxiety, dehydration, sleeplessness, heartburn, palpitations, or mood swings.
- If you are trying to cut back consider substituting a regular cup of coffee with a one-shot espresso drink. 8 oz of brewed coffee has 140 mg of caffeine and 1 oz of espresso only has 75 mg.
- Another tip to cut back would be to try green tea as a source of caffeine over coffee. It only has about 45 mg of caffeine a serving and may provide valuable antioxidant effects.
- Check out this link to Energy Fiend for a detailed list of caffeinated beverages. It also allows you to track your usage!  
<http://www.energyfiend.com/>

With a Latte Healthy Regards,

Jeanne Farley, MD

To schedule your annual executive physical, please contact us at 312.926.1300.