

What's wrong with Coffee and Caffeine?*

By Jeff Thiboutot

Coffee and caffeine is heavily used in the U.S. Nearly 90% of adult Americans drink caffeinated beverages. Nearly 100 million adults drink 3 or more cups of coffee a day. As you will see this is not a healthy practice and is linked to numerous problems. Keep in mind that using caffeine and other stimulants is like taking money out of the bank but never putting any in, eventually you will run out.

There are over 200 volatile substances that have been identified in coffee. There is also a pesticide residue on the coffee bean with resulting amounts in the coffee. Chlorine is also found in coffee. The chlorine comes from the filters, which have been bleached and contain residues of chlorine. This array of chemicals can have harmful effects on the body. Decaf is not much better than regular. The only thing taken out is caffeine, (that's good), but it still has the rest of the chemicals. The decaffeination process uses methylene chloride (a solvent, paint remover and propellant*). This chemical is harmful and residues of it are in the decaf coffee.

My overall suggestion is if you like coffee, use it sparingly, use a high quality bean (organic) and use unbleached filters. Also, use plain whole cream instead of the cream substitutes that are made of a bunch of chemicals. Other choices for coffee are Pero® and Caffinix®; two coffee alternatives made from roasted grains. These products are made just like coffee and have a similar taste. Other excellent, (hot or cold), beverages are green tea and herbal teas. These beverages not only taste good but, are good for you.

The following are some of the negative effects from the continuous intake of coffee and other caffeine containing products (soda, teas, over-the-counter medications, and prescription medications). Your particular effect will depend on your current level of health, individual sensitivity, daily amount and the consistency of intake. It seems, on average, more than two 6oz cups of coffee or 100-200mg of caffeine on a continual basis will be problematic. Decaf, although caffeine-free, has it's own problems, so it is best to keep to the two-cup guideline. Remember, if you are tired and run down it is not from a deficiency of coffee or caffeine. The cause is usually from nutrient deficiencies, anemia, poor digestion, poor sleeping habits, poor time management or some other underlying problem.

Here are some of the unhealthy effects from the habitual/excessive intake of coffee and caffeine:

(If not stated, the item is referring to caffeine)

- The liver is the main detoxifying organ for caffeine, hence increasing its work load
- Coffee contains polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, extremely toxic compounds. These are the same compounds found in barbecued meats.
- Stimulates the fight or flight response when it is not needed, hence increasing our overall stress load
- Reduces the brains problem solving ability
- As little as 100 milligrams can cause a significant decrease in recall and reasoning
- Associated with lower academic performance and greater incidence of psychosomatic illnesses.

- Decreases cerebral (brain) blood flow
- Decreases oxygen levels of brain tissue
- Increases blood pressure in the brain which increases the risk of stroke
- Increases cortisol levels (stress hormone)
- Decreases DHEA levels (lowered amounts is linked with numerous ailments)
- Decreases stress threshold
- Caffeine disrupts deep sleep (stage 4), the restorative phase of sleep
- Decreases immune function or can over stimulate the immune system leading to autoimmune disorders
- Has addictive qualities similar to morphine, nicotine and cocaine
- Decreases absorption of iron, increases chance of anemia
- Plays a role in hypoglycemia
- Increases the loss of thiamin (B1) and other B vitamins
- Increases the loss of calcium and other minerals
- Increases cholesterol levels, not from the caffeine but from two other chemicals found in regular and decaf, catechol and kahweol.
- Increases the risk of arrhythmia's
- Can exacerbate mitro valve prolapse (MVP)
- Increases homocysteine levels (a strong heart disease promoter)
- Depletes magnesium
- Increase HCL production on an empty stomach and decreased production when taken with food causes both diarrhea and constipation
- Increases problems with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Impairs digestion
- Increases peripheral vascular resistance (blood pressure increases)
- Caffeine crosses the placenta and effects the unborn child
- Individuals who drink the most coffee often suffer chronic depression

Remember:

If you are tired and run down it is not from a deficiency of coffee or caffeine.

***References**

Caffeine Blues by Stephen Cherniske M.S.
Allergies and Holistic Healing by Dr. Skye Weintraub
The Diet Cure by Julie Ross M.A.