



CAFFEINISM: The Side Effects Of Caffeine

Remember the days when we used to talk about our problems over a cup of coffee? Well, now coffee is the problem. Rather than getting the edge, we've found that coffee makes us edgy. Some people drink three cups of coffee, a few cokes, and take a couple Excedrin all in the course of a morning. That amounts to over 500 mg. of caffeine. Is it any wonder the use of tranquilizers is one of the most prevalent drugs prescribed in America? In fact, one in seven adult Americans take some sort of tranquilizer to calm their nerves. Taking stimulants and tranquilizers is like driving with your foot on the gas and the brakes at the same time. It's all too easy for doctors to misdiagnose a case of out-and-out caffeinism as anxiety neurosis caused by emotional factors.

Coffee is the number one drink in America with six of ten adults drinking it every day. Caffeine is probably the most widely used drug in America, and it has absolutely no nutritional value. With this wonder drug, people think they can get the jump on their fellow man. And teenagers love cola, which accounts for 25% of the total caffeine consumption. It is estimated that 30% of Americans take between 500-600 mg. of caffeine per day, and 10% use more than 1000 mg. per day. The average person, including children, consumes 200 mg. per day. One cup of coffee contains 100-150 mg. and one to two cups exceed the level at which your brain can be adversely affected.

HABITUATION IS CAFFEINE'S SECRET OF SUCCESS. Caffeine enters all organs and tissues of the body within a few minutes of ingestion. Ninety percent is metabolized and only 10% is excreted unchanged in the urine. Caffeine's may be subtle and obscured by the multifaceted nature of many chronic disease states.

You may be thinking, hey, everybody drinks coffee, tea or coke... Can it be that bad? Well, it's time you understand some of the side effects of caffeine, and if you are having any of the symptoms we are about to describe, it may be well to discontinue consuming anything with caffeine. We have categorized how caffeine affects all the systems of the body for better understanding.

Caffeine's Effects On The Nervous System:

1. In children, it may cause damage to the brain and central nervous system development. A Survey revealed that even pregnant women consume an average of 193 mg. of caffeine per day. And 13% (or over 400,000) pregnant women drink five or more cups of coffee per day, causing thousands of birth defects.
2. Caffeine is a powerful central nervous system stimulant. Large doses may impair motor function, where delicate coordination is required. It increases reaction to sensory stimuli, but the post stimulation produces a "letdown effect" resulting in fatigue, lethargy, and depression.
3. High doses can produce symptoms indistinguishable from anxiety neurosis.

4. Caffeine can cause nervousness, irritability, jitteriness, muscle tension and trembling.
5. It can also cause headaches, shaky hands, and even hallucinations.
6. Caffeine is the principle cause of "restless leg syndrome". This results in insomnia and an uncomfortable feeling caused by involuntary movement of the legs.
7. Children have increased hyperactivity and insomnia from cocoa and cola drinks. Too many parents can't figure out why they can't control their kids and why they can't sleep when the reason is due to the caffeine they consume.
8. Caffeine has significant effects on muscle contractions...relaxing smooth muscle and increasing the contraction of skeletal muscles.
9. Caffeine may mask mental and physical fatigue. This may be dangerous if used while driving. It is not a substitute for normal rest or sleep.
10. Caffeine may interact with other drugs. It decreases barbitol-induced sleeping time.
11. Caffeine is habit-forming and addictive.
12. Thiamine (vitamin B1) is destroyed by both coffee and tea. Any heavy coffee drinker is likely to be deficient in B1 which is crucial to mental health and tranquility. It is called the morale vitamin. Lack of thiamine causes nervous exhaustion, fatigue, loss of appetite, loss of memory, depression, constipation, inability to concentrate, feelings of inadequacy, lethargy, and intense drowsiness.
13. Caffeine could trigger psychosis through its action on a set of chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters. They convey information across microscopic gaps, called synapses, between nerve cells in the brain. Caffeine causes significant changes in these different transmitter systems. Caffeine taken in ordinary doses is a threat to your mental health.
14. The American Pharmaceutical Association's "Handbook on Non-Prescription Drugs" says: "Doses larger than 250 mg. often cause insomnia, restlessness, irritability, nervousness, tremor, headache, and in rare cases, a form of delirium manifested as perceived noises and flashes of light." (5th edition, 1977) It takes just two cups of strong black coffee to deliver 300 mg. of caffeine, and the latest survey by the international coffee organization found that Americans age 10 and over drink coffee at a rate higher than two cups a day.
15. All mental and physical stimulation ceases if you consume more than two cups at a time. After two cups, coffee acts to slow your reaction time and impair your thinking.
16. Caffeine could well be one of the most frequent causes of chronic recurrent headaches.
17. Ten grams (40 cups) may cause grand mal seizure, respiratory failure and death.

Caffeine's Effect On The Heart And Circulatory System:

1. Coffee increases the free fatty acids causing an increase in blood fats and cholesterol associated with heart attack and other cardiovascular disease.
2. Caffeine can cause heart palpitations and lightheadedness.
3. It can cause flushing as it dilates the blood vessels.
4. Caffeine can cause tachycardia (rapid heartbeat), arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat), as caffeine stimulates the cardiac muscle.
5. Caffeine can cause coronary disease, heart disease and high blood pressure.
6. There is an increase in myocardial infraction (lack of blood supply to the heart) among coffee drinkers.

7. There is a 60% increase in heart attacks associated with consumption of 1-5 cups per day and 120% increase with more than 5 cups per day. Yet, some coronary care units still serve coffee, tea, and cola drinks.
8. Heart specialists have recognized coffee as a mild poison.

Effects Of Caffeine On The Gastrointestinal System:

1. Coffee increases the amount of hydrochloric acid in the stomach causing hyperacidity. This accounts for the "burning" sensation reported by ulcer patients. There is a 72% greater chance of developing ulcers in coffee drinkers compared to non-users. Caffeine aggravates the symptoms of peptic ulcer.
2. Coffee drinkers are twice as likely to develop cancer of the pancreas than non-users. Coffee could cause more than half of the cancer of the pancreas in the U.S., according to Harvard researchers. This deadly form of cancer takes the lives of 20,000 Americans annually. One to two cups per day doubled the risk; three or more tripled the risk. Cancer of the pancreas is one of the deadliest forms of cancer. Less than 1% survives more than five years.
3. Caffeine affects how your body absorbs iron, leading to anemia. Strong coffee takes twice as much iron from being absorbed, and using cream worsens the effect. The tannic acid in tea also combines with iron to form a non-digestible complex that is passed out of the body.
4. Caffeine accumulates in the body in liver disease.
5. Caffeine is a possible stimulating factor in cancer of the stomach.
6. Caffeine stimulates the secretions of the small intestines.
7. Caffeine stimulates water secretion and can cause nausea and loose stools.
8. Caffeine causes a hypoglycemic response in the presence of glucose, and it elevates blood glucose.
9. Caffeine alters the metabolic status of human beings and can increase your metabolic rate 10-25% with 500 mg. of caffeine.

Caffeine's Effects On The Kidneys, Bladder, And Prostate:

1. A study at Harvard showed a correlation between coffee and cancer of the bladder. Cola drinkers have a significant increase in bladder cancer.
2. Fluid retention, which persisted 10 years, was caused by daily ingestion of 18 cups a day by a patient who complained of being a nervous wreck. All symptoms disappeared when she quit coffee.
3. Under conditions of stress from dehydration, temperature changes, and decreased food intake, caffeine is even more toxic.
4. Alcohol and caffeine have been shown to be physiological antagonists. Alcohol consumption is increased in rates when caffeine is added to the diet.
5. Caffeine is a diuretic. It causes frequent urination.
6. There is a correlation between national coffee ingestion and prostate cancer.

Birth Defects And Congenital Malformations:

1. FDA scientists are advising pregnant women to avoid caffeine-containing foods and drugs. They are considering putting a warning on coffee to pregnant women due to the risk of fetal malformations.

2. Caffeine crosses the placenta to the baby and even gets into the breast milk.
3. Birth defects may include: Cleft palate, digital defects, joint defects, absence of a jaw, unusual smallness of a lower jaw, blood tumors, club feet and delayed skeletal development.
4. In England, Ectrodactyly (a congenital absence of all or part of the fingers or toes) has been connected to heavy caffeine consumption during pregnancy.
5. In large doses it has been shown to be a mutagen in animals, plants and bacteria.
6. Caffeine may also cause abortion.

Miscellaneous Side Effects:

1. Caffeine is a stimulant of thyroid hormone secretion.
2. Caffeine has immunosuppressant properties (it decreases the body's resistance to infection).
3. Caffeine predisposes women to fibrocystic breast disease, which involves lumps, thickening, and nodules in the breasts, and it increases the risk of breast cancer.

Withdrawal Symptoms Of Caffeine:

How do you know if you are addicted to caffeine? Stop using it for two to three days. You will experience the following symptoms:

1. Headaches – about 18 hours after your last consumption
2. Drowsiness and almost overwhelming malaise
3. Lethargy
4. Runny nose and nausea
5. A cottony feeling in the mouth
6. Nervousness and irritability
7. Trembling with a chill
8. Insomnia
9. Depression and inability to work effectively

These withdrawal symptoms can last up to two weeks or more depending on how much you have consumed at your age.

The most obvious question you are probably asking yourself right now is: "If I can't drink coffee, tea, alcohol, soft drinks, or chocolate cocoa, what else is there to drink?"

First of all is the obvious: Fresh spring water. Everyone should drink 8-10 glasses of water each day to provide the body with needed fluids. After strenuous exercise on a hot day, nothing quenches your thirst like water. The juice of a fresh lemon in a glass of hot water is a good way to start your day and will also help you lose weight.

Next, try carbonated spring water (Perrier), plain or with lemon, lime or orange. It can be purchased in any grocery store. It contains no calories, sugar, or chemicals. It is a good carbonated, refreshing substitute for pop. Next try sugar-free fruit and vegetable juices. One of your best investments could be a vegetable juicer to juice them fresh. Nothing tastes better or is healthier for you than freshly juiced fruits and vegetables. Last, most health food stores have natural cereal beverages to replace coffee that are very pleasant tasting. Some popular ones are Sipp, Caffix, and Pero.

Last, what about caffeine-free coffee and soft drinks? A chemical used in making decaffeinated coffee (TCE-trichloroethylene) has been known to cause liver cancer. The National Cancer Institute also warned against using three possible substitutes to TCE. Replacing a chemical with carcinogenic risk with another chemical of unknown risk may result in a more hazardous alternative. In other words, all the side effects of the chemicals used in decaffeinated coffee are still unknown. Caffeine free soft drinks and sugar-free soft drinks still have substitutes and chemicals. It's best to try to develop a taste for healthy beverages. Think about how much beverage you consume every day and in a lifetime! It's the fluid your body uses to trigger every chemical reaction and enzyme activity in the body. If you don't think a few chemicals in the beverages you consume make any difference in how you feel, try putting one percent water in your gas tank and see how well your car runs.

The Bottom Line Is That Health Is A Choice — Your Choice !!!

Conquer Caffeine

Tips To Lower Or Avoid Caffeine Intake:

1. Have Plenty Of Healthy Substitutes Around: Mineral water, fresh fruit and vegetable juices, herbal teas, frozen juices, etc.
2. Question The Impulse: Are you thirsty? Drink water
Do you need to wake up? Breathe deeply. Take a brisk walk, quick calisthenics.
3. Do You Need To Feel Better? Regular exercise produces more of the natural brain chemicals that improve mood.
4. Are You Chronically Sleepy And Tired? Get more sleep!