



By
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Sometime ago, While I was taking history from a 83 years old lady, I asked, "Ma'm, do you drink coffee?"

"Yes," She said.

"How many cups?" I continued.

"Five cups a day, Doc," she replied.

"Ma'm do you realize that coffee is a slow poison?" I pressed.

"It must be Doc. I'm 83 years old and it's still trying to get me!"

Is coffee getting on your nerves? You are not alone. More importantly, it also seems to be having an impact on your plastic cards too!

An estimated 85 million people consume caffeine in the form of coffee, tea, chocolate, sodas, and some nuts. Americans seem to have a love affair with coffee. The more expensive the coffee, the better they feel! The more caffeine, the merrier they feel!! That's where the real problems begin. Caffeine is a drug with considerable cardiovascular and central nervous system effects which can last way beyond your last cup of coffee.

Caffeine Dose

A regular cup of coffee (8 ounces) has approximately 50-60 mg of caffeine. Brewed coffee can contain as much as 115 mg of caffeine. Soft drinks contain roughly 20-65 mg of caffeine per 12 ounce can. The FDA has set a limit of less than 65 mg caffeine per drink. However, some energy drinks may have caffeine well above the FDA limit of 65 mg per 12 ounces. Twelve ounces of iced tea contains 70 mg of caffeine. Starbucks double shot was noted to have more than 105 mg and SoBe NoFear was found to have as much as 141 mg per 16 ounce drink. The daily caffeine consumptions should be less than 300 mg or equivalent to less than 3 drinks per day.

Extra strong caffeine tablets containing as much as 200 mg of caffeine are sold in the market that are sometime used by athletes. It is also found in some medicines such as Exedrine, Midol, No-Doz, etc. When one consumes more than 250 mg of caffeine at one time, the person can develop symptoms of caffeine intoxication, which are exaggerated central nervous system symptoms.

Caffeine Effects

Caffeine belongs to xanthene group of chemicals similar to the theophylline used to relieve bronchospasm in asthma patients. It is a central nervous

system stimulant. Caffeine is normally metabolized and excreted in the urine within a few hours. The effects of caffeine last only a few hours.

It raises blood pressure. However, the transient rise in blood pressure does not lead to chronic hypertension. People who drink more than 5 cups of coffee per day have double the risk of heart disease compared to those who do not drink coffee. It can also increase heart rate and cause palpitations. Coffee, especially boiled and processed at high temperatures (espresso), has been known to increase the cholesterol and LDL levels. Coffee also has been known to elevate the homocystein levels which increases the heart disease risk. It increases the adrenaline and cortisol (stress hormone) levels in the blood. However, some studies have shown a reduce risk of heart disease symptoms in people over the age of 65 who consume caffeine containing drinks compared to the younger populations.

It interferes with sleep, especially, if you drink caffeine containing drinks late in the evening or night. Did you ever wonder why you could not sleep after you had a regular soda late in the night? It makes kid hyperactive. Sometimes, the hand may shake.

It also releases free fatty acids from the fatty tissue. It increases urination which can lead to dehydration. In addition, there is increased loss of magnesium

and calcium in the urine. There is no correlation between moderate caffeine consumption and cancer. It increases acid production in the stomach. However, caffeine does not help in weight loss. Exercise does!

Caffeine Withdrawal

Caffeine is habit forming. People, who are used to regular caffeine consumption, experience withdrawal symptoms 12 hours after the last dose of caffeine. They may have headache, anxiety, nervousness, fatigue, drowsiness, and depression. If you are trying to kick the caffeine habit, take a little time. Your body needs to get adjusted over time. Some people may be able to quit cold turkey just as someone would try for smoking cessation or alcohol withdrawal. However, you may try reducing your coffee intake week by week and then eliminate totally. Replacing regular coffee with decaffeinated drinks may help to reduce coffee crave?

Management

Moderation is the key word when it comes to caffeine drinks consumption. Having 2-3 cups caffeine containing drinks have not been associated with serious illnesses. Pregnant women are encouraged to keep their caffeine intake to less 120 mg or less than 2 drinks per day.

If you are having significant symptoms related to caffeine, you should seriously consider reducing or eliminating the caffeine habit. First, begin by getting rid of soft drinks which are nothing but drinks loaded with carbohydrates and caffeine. Replace your sodas with plain water. Second, you may consider caffeine free drinks in place of drinks that contain 3 to 4 times the caffeine. The decaffeinated drinks reduce the adrenergic and central nervous symptoms, but they do not reduce the heart disease risk. Avoid caffeinated drinks in the evening if you are taking a test next morning or have a mission critical job the next morning in order to avoid sleeping through your test or job.

Energy drinks may seem to give you a boost which results from large odes of sugar and high levels of caffeine. You may consider regular sleep, good exercise, and healthy eating habits as a means to get energy.

Disclosure: Information provided here is for educational purpose only. Please consult with your physician for any medical advice.

visit www.sugarlandheartcenter.com for a more comprehensive information on heart diseases."

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