Wellness and Health Promotion 80 Fifth Avenue, 3rd floor 212.229.1671, option 4
Student Health Services NY, NY 10011 wellness@newschool.edu

Caffeine: Tips for Decreasing It Comfortably

These suggestions can help you decrease your caffeine intake.

Keep a log

Write down the coffee, tea, and soft drinks you drink for a few days. This will help you understand when and how much you drink.

Take it slowly

Decrease intake gradually over 1 or 2 weeks:

- Eliminate ½ cup (C) of coffee/tea or 1 C of pop (about two thirds of a can or one half of a 20-ounce bottle) each day
- Start eliminating the coffee, tea, and soft drinks that you drink in the afternoon or evening to help with restoring restful sleep—you will have more energy during the day and feel less need for caffeine if you get proper sleep

Find a substitute

Have a substitute beverage instead of coffee, tea, or soft drinks.

Try drinking:

- Water
- A hot-grain beverage, such as Teecino® or Pero®
- Herbal tea
- Sugar-free lemonade or fruit drink
- A small glass of juice or milk

Stay active

Exercise or keep active during the times that you used to drink coffee, tea, and soft drinks. If you get adequate activity, you will have more energy and feel less need for caffeine.

Try these suggestions:

- Go for a walk
- Play outdoors with children or a pet
- Work in your garden or do yard work
- Clean the house
- Dance to your favorite CD

Improve your nutrition

Many people drink coffee, tea, and soft drinks instead of eating. You should eat a meal with carbohydrate and protein three times a day, such eggs and toast, a turkey sandwich, spaghetti with meat sauce, etc.

Wellness and Health Promotion 80 Fifth Avenue, 3rd floor 212.229.1671, option 4
Student Health Services NY, NY 10011 wellness@newschool.edu

Caffeine: Why You Should Avoid It

Medication side effects

Caffeine may cause more medication side effects. It interacts with medications and may increase side effects, such as:

- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Possible seizures
- Possible heart rhythm changes

Anxiousness

You can become anxious. Caffeine is a stimulant that increases anxiety. It can start a panic attack.

Addiction

You can become addicted. You will keep using caffeine despite the problems it causes. You will feel you are unable to cut down. You will need more and more to get the same effect, and will experience withdrawal symptoms if you quit.

Poor sleep

You can have trouble sleeping. Caffeine delays you getting to sleep, reduces sleep time, and decreases the quality of sleep.

Heartburn

You can get heartburn. Caffeine causes an upset stomach.

Dehydration

You can become dehydrated. Caffeine is a diuretic, like a "water pill." It takes fluid out of your body.

How much caffeine is too much?

- 200 milligrams (mg) or more can cause anxiety, panic attacks, poor sleep, and other side effects in some people
- More than a cup, can, or 20-ounce (oz) bottle/day is possibly too much, if you notice symptoms or if your health care professional has asked you to limit your caffeine intake

Item	Caffeine Content
Drip-brewed coffee—5 fluid ounce (fl oz), about half a mug	110–150 mg
Tea—6 fl oz, 5-minute brew	20–50 mg
Iced tea—12 fl oz	22–36 mg
Mountain Dew®—20 fl oz, bottle	92 mg
Red Bull—16 fl oz, can	160 mg
Powershot—1–2 fl oz, bottle	100–125 mg
Barq's Root Beer—20 fl oz, bottle	33 mg
Milk or dark chocolate—1 oz	1–35 mg
Hot chocolate—5 fl oz	2–15 mg
Chocolate milk—8 fl oz	8 mg
Chocolate pudding—½ cup (C)	7 mg
Chocolate ice cream—½ C	2 mg

References and recommended readings

CoffeeFAQ.com. Coffee and caffeine FAQ. Available at: http://coffeefaq.com/caffaq.html. Accessed February 17, 2011.

Coffee Science Information Centre. Questions and answers. Available at: http://www.cosic.org/questions-and-answers. Accessed February 17, 2011.

Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. Information about caffeine dependence. Available at: http://www.caffeinedependence.org/caffeine_dependence.html. Accessed February 17, 2011.

Contributed by Charlene Dubois, MPA, RD

Review Date 2/11
G-1527