

CAFFEINE & ITS LATEST UPDATES

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Introduction

No other substance has been a subject matter for more health bulletins-mostly contradictory-than coffee. Over the years, numerous researchers have declared coffee bad for every part of the human system. People eagerly consume these reports along with their morning coffee. Other researchers keep coming up with various findings that rate caffeine as the second most actively traded commodity on the planet, after crude oil-as downright healthful.

Discussion

Years back studies showed that coffee drinkers had higher than normal cholesterol levels and so more prone to heart problems. But in the last two decades these coffee people are brewing their coffee than boiling it. Again filters reduce the cholesterol-promoting chemicals.

A 1981 study had concluded that coffee was a major cause of pancreatic cancer. The same now stands discredited.

It is accepted that coffee (caffeine) increases the effectiveness of painkillers. No wonder, in combination with other drugs caffeine is prescribed for migraine. And caffeine's role as an antidepressant is gaining greater recognition. Two to three cups of coffee a day containing around 300 milligrams of caffeine can even have the effect of preventing suicides in certain cases.

To advocate of caffeine the product increases alertness when one is tired or bored. With coffee considered conducive to productivity people drinking more and stronger coffee, put in bursts of caffeine energy into their work. Yet, caffeine can at best increase mental activity; not upgrade its quality-despite what generations of people, especially writers have come to assume that caffeine makes them think more clearly.

On the minus side, there is the finding that drinking more than 3 cups of coffee a day lowers a woman's chance of conception by a third. And excessive caffeine consumption has been linked to miscarriages and low birth weight. Caffeine passes easily through the placenta to the unborn child, and through the mother's milk to the breast fed body.

Researchers are also looking at the possibility that coffee speeds calcium excretion, thus increasing the risk of bone loss. Such bone loss could pose particular problems for elderly woman, making them more vulnerable to osteoporosis.

Every one knows that coffee keeps one awake. Effects of caffeine last for longer than what people commonly think.. It takes the body three to six hours to get rid of half the caffeine consumed. Even after you have dozed off to sleep, it can interfere with REM (Rapid Eye Movement) cycles and make sleep less restful.

In a few areas of health the current research findings on the effect of caffeine remain inconclusive. One is the link between caffeine and breast cancer. Despite numerous scary studies there is no serious evidence of such a link. Again the effect on blood pressure, if any, is temporary and marginal.

Caffeine is a colonic stimulant, which means it causes the stomach to empty faster without effecting the rate of digestion. Controlled medical opinion does not rate it a health hazard. Caffeine, however, acts as a diuretic and also a mild laxative.

The debate goes on about the caffeine-related health risk. Caffeine is also there in tea (around 20-30 milligrams in a strongly brewed cup of tea) or in colas (a 12 ounce bottle of coca-cola contains 45 milligrams of caffeine and pepsi 38 milligrams.)

The question is, is caffeine addictive? Those accustomed to but deprived of it, report irritability, nervousness, restlessness, and inability to work well. A Common complaint is headache; dull or severe, short-lived or persisting over the day. And this headache eases with the intake of caffeine. No wonder so many headache remedies include caffeine; for example meclizine, which contains 20 mg of caffeine and acts as a potential analgesic. It is also used widely for symptoms of common cold .. flu, as antitussives, expectorant and decongestants. Some of the products are sinarest, dristan etc.

Caffeine use seems to fit several parameters of drug addiction; compulsion to continue use, tolerance for the drug, and the withdrawal syndrome.

If caffeine is addictive, coffee drinkers still have a route open to them, and that is of the decaffeinated coffee. Now more than 20% of the coffee consumed in USA is decaffeinated. It's another matter, most of the decafs taste terrible. Industries are now coming up with chemical processes that leave the decaf with a more acceptable taste. Such as chemical process of methylene chloride or the latest one of using super critical carbon dioxide.

On the other, coffee is making inroads into ice-creams, yoghurts & confectionery. More and more concoctions come laced with coffee.

Conclusion:

Lastly mankind's love affair with coffee seems set to continue, not with standing all those debates on the health risks involved. Indeed a new coffee chic is developing; combination of caffeine with other drugs is the rising current demand for medical professionals.