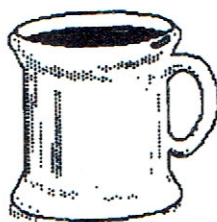


Health:

THE EXTRAORDINARY EFFECTS OF CAFFEINE



by Dr. Ede Koenig

Caffeine is the "drug of choice" for nine out of 10 Americans. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, Americans consume 33 million gallons of coffee every day, plus consume vast amounts of, tea, chocolate, soda and other caffeine-containing products.

Caffeine is a mind-altering stimulant that produces a surge of nervous energy, only to leave its victim exhausted, irritable, short-tempered, depressed and depleted. The "brown drink" family (foods that contain caffeine) is the No. 2 cause of cancer in America today, according to cancer researcher Dr. Bruce Ames. These "foods" all contain chemicals called methylxanthins. How do they affect the body?

Caffeine is converted into uric acid, which is the cause of painful gout, a form of arthritis. It can cause poor balance, racing heart, high-pitched voice, insomnia, racing and disconnected thoughts, poor memory, fatigue, restless leg syndrome, hand tremors, anxiety and dread, hostility, sleep disturbances, headaches, reflex hyper-excitability, irritability, agitation, anxiety, dehydration, and general discomfort. But these are only the short-term effects.

Methylxanthines actually alter the protoplasm of cells in concentrated amounts, and may remain there for life. They cause mutagenic, or gene-altering changes that can be seen in offspring, possibly to second generation.

More startling yet are Dr. Agatha Thrash's comments on the mutagenic

effects of methylxanthines in "Poison with a Capital C", which notes, "It is frightening to contemplate that such a widespread habit is most surely weakening the entire race and causing permanent loss of certain faculties of the mind, or resistance to disease through the mutation damage of chromosomes."

How about decaffeinated coffee? Coffee has at least 100 potentially harmful chemical components that are still present in decaffeinated coffee. For instance, the caffeols, which are coffee oils, are still present and can irritate the gastrointestinal tract. Many other chemicals which have been linked to cancer and heart disease are still present along with other central nervous system stimulants.

According to the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, just one cup daily, whether decaffeinated or not, increases the risk of bladder cancer by 300 percent. Caffeine strains the heart because it stimulates the heart muscle, but reduces its blood supply by constricting the arteries at the same time, leading to high blood pressure.

According to the Journal of Nutrition, one to six cups increases heart attack risk by 60 percent. Caffeine also stresses the pancreas and compounds diabetes by raising blood sugar levels and fatty acids.

Female caffeine users have an increased incidence of stillbirths, fetal deaths and miscarriages. Also, they have more fibrocystic disease, which increases the breast cancer risk 400

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percent. Brown drink users have an increased risk of stomach, kidney, lung, pancreatic, ovarian and colon cancer.

The link between caffeine use, even in small amounts, and osteoporosis (porous bones) due to loss of calcium, is irrefutable. One milligram of calcium is lost for each 10 milligrams of caffeine consumed and this loss is definitely a contributor to bone porosity in children as well as adults.

Americans drink 40 million colas every day. Many colas and sodas not only contain caffeine, they also contain either large amounts of sugar (about 12 tsp.) or artificial sweeteners. Aspartame (NutraSweet) has been implicated in a host of disorders, ranging from migraine headaches to brain seizures. Xylitol has been shown to foster the growth of streptococcus mutants, a mouth bacteria that causes cavities on contact with sugar! It is well known that the phosphoric acid in colas is detrimental to developing bones, and will even cause a leaching effect of calcium from the bone matrix.

A former president of the American Medical Association, the late Dr. John Witherspoon, in referring to cola drinkers, wrote: "They really look like morphine habitues...one glass creates a demand for more...then, when its effect wears off, the reaction is one of depression."

Brown drink users lose fluid due to the diuretic effect. Even though they may consume large amounts, the

net effect is dehydration of body tissue. Tea drinkers have vitamin B deficiencies. Tannin, a chemical component of tea, has been shown to interfere with iron absorption.

All methylxanthines have been linked with goiter formation, and tea is highest in theophylline, which is the most damaging to the thyroid. Tea drinking increases the risk of stomach, kidney, lung, rectal and esophageal cancer and has been implicated in the formation of kidney stones.

The principle methylxanthine in chocolate is theobromine, another harmful alkaloid which has been shown to cause abnormal glandular growth, central nervous system stimulation, sleeplessness, depression and anxiety. Chocolate also contains caffeine and theophylline and theophylline can upset the stomach, cause nausea and vomiting and an enlarged prostate in men. It is also implicated in cancers. Children are more prone to bed wetting when given chocolate and the high phosphate levels, as well as the high sugar content, interfere with calcium absorption.

We all know how much Americans love their chocolate. Perhaps the carob bean would fill the bill. It comes from a pod on the locust tree and had been called St. John's Bread. It is a good source of protein, is high in natural sugar, rich in fiber, low in fat, contains B vitamins, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, manganese, chromium, copper and nickel. It is a rich source of pectin, the fiber which has been shown to help lower cholesterol and there is indication that it is an anti-cancer agent. Because of the pectin, carob is good for the stomach and intestinal lining and has helped to relieve nausea, diarrhea and vomiting. (from Media Bypass, P.O. Box 5326, Evansville, Indiana 47716)