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HEALTHY HUDDLE WITH GEHA.

CAFFEINE: BENEFITS AND RISKS

There really isn't anything like that warm first sip of coffee in the morning or even afternoon. It gives us that motivation for our workout, to get out of the sleepy daze in the morning and keeps us productive when we're feeling the slump in our day. The number one choice of caffeine for Americans is coffee. Studies show caffeine can reduce risk of Alzheimer's disease, improve your mental functioning, short-term memory and speed up your reaction times. It can also boost your metabolism, just a little, which most of us can use a little boost right about now, right?



NUTRITIONALLY SPEAKING, COFFEE HAS SOME POTASSIUM, NIACIN, AND MAGNESIUM. Caffeine beverages can also count towards your hydration for the day, provide some good antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties.

Making your coffee or tea with fat-free or low-fat milk is one way to increase your daily calcium and vitamin D intake. If your diet does not include dairy, a soy option is a calcium-rich alternative. Just be mindful if adding sweetener since coffee drinks can be a source of added sugars which can lead to weight gain.

SO, HOW MUCH CAFFEINE IS TOO MUCH? The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics reports three to five 8-ounce cups of coffee provide about 400 milligrams of caffeine, which is the most that is recommended per day for healthy adults. Certain groups, such as people with hypertension and the elderly, may be at a higher risk for negative side effects of caffeine and so should consider discussing their intake with a health care provider. Pregnant and breastfeeding women will also want to limit caffeine and should discuss their intake with a health care provider. Due to caffeine being a stimulant, it is not recommended for children.

CHOOSE DRINKS THAT HAVE SUGAR FREE OPTIONS AND WATCH WHAT YOU PUT IN COFFEE AND TEAS. Added sugar and dairy can add lots of extra calories, so you can try Truvia or Stevia instead. Also, pay attention to how caffeine makes you feel. People's sensitivity to caffeine varies, so if you're bothered by headaches, restlessness, or anxiety or irritability, pregnant or breast feeding you may want to reevaluate your caffeine intake accordingly. If your reason for grabbing a cup of coffee is to give you a boost of energy, don't forget the role of good nutrition and adequate sleep in our daily energy levels.

LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN LIFE, MODERATION IS KEY. Too much of a good thing can counterproductive. On a positive note, that coffee we love so much, counts towards our daily hydration, helps speed up our metabolism and it helps with memory.

Sources:

Radiological Society of North American — [Caffeine Boosts Short-Term Memory \(webmd.com\)](#)

[Caffeine: How much is too much? - Mayo Clinic](#)

[Benefits of Coffee \(eatright.org\)](#)

Explore more at the [Chiefs Wellness Program homepage](#) -->