

Creating Health & Nutrition

What's the Scoop on Coffee?

What is Coffee?

Coffee typically refers to the drink made from the roasted beans of a coffee tree. The two main coffee trees used in the commercial industry are *Coffea arabica* and *Coffea canephora*. *Coffea arabica* represents about 70 percent of the world's coffee production, and it tends to be higher in price and lower in caffeine. The other most common type, *Coffea canephora*, makes up 30 percent of the world's market and is used mainly for blends and instant coffees. It has a more distinctive taste than *arabica* and around 50 to 60 percent more caffeine. Roasting

the beans brings out the aroma and flavor and readies them to be ground and brewed.

There are a variety of ways to prepare and serve coffee. A typical "cup" of coffee is considered to be from 6 to 8 ounces. The table below shows the size, ounce amount, and caffeine content for different preparation methods of coffee.

Coffee can also be served "decaffeinated" (i.e., without the "energy" ingredient, caffeine) while keeping the taste and smell at their original levels. Four methods of decaffeinating coffee exist today: indirect solvent process, direct solvent process, Swiss

water process, and carbon dioxide process. Indirect and direct solvent processes use the FDA-approved chemicals methylene chloride or ethyl chloride. The Swiss water process uses the natural way, with water, and the carbon dioxide process uses carbon dioxide to remove the caffeine from the coffee beans. Decaffeinated coffee still contains 2 to 4 milligrams of caffeine in an 8-ounce cup.

What Should You Know about Drinking Coffee?

Although coffee creations may involve the addition of many ingredients such as milk, sugar, and syrups, this fact sheet will focus on the "undressed"

form of this beverage. Research shows that when used appropriately, coffee can be a safe, enjoyable, and even beneficial brew.

While coffee is a complex plant with many different features, one of its active ingredients (famous for making you active) is caffeine. Drinking coffee, particularly because of its caffeine content, may be of concern for some health conditions or situations. However, despite potential concerns, studies show that drinking 1 to 5 cups of coffee per day may prove beneficial for your health and does not cause increased risk for death. Chlorogenic acid and other antioxidant

| Type of Coffee | Size (ounces) | Caffeine Content (mg) |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Brewed | 8 | 95–200 |
| Brewed single-serve varieties | 8 | 75–150 |
| Espresso, restaurant-style | 1 | 45–75 |
| Instant | 8 | 27–173 |
| Specialty drink (latte or mocha) | 8 | 63–175 |



What the Studies Say . . .

Recommendations

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Pregnancy | Caffeine can pass from mom to baby. Because of potential impact of caffeine, lower caffeine/caffeinated coffee intake is advised to reduce risk of miscarriage or problems in the baby's development. | No more than 3 cups of coffee per day. |
| Bone density/osteoporosis | Consuming greater than 4 cups or 400 mg of coffee may be linked to a decrease in the density of bones; however, there is lack of strong evidence that coffee is to blame, but instead may be from not drinking enough calcium-rich beverages, such as milk. | Limit to 2 to 3 cups per day, but not in place of calcium-rich beverages (e.g., milk). |
| Diabetes | People with diabetes who have uncontrolled sugar levels may experience even more difficulty controlling blood sugar if consuming caffeinated coffee. Drinking caffeinated or decaffeinated coffee may lower risk for type 2 diabetes. | If having difficulty controlling blood sugar, switch to decaffeinated coffee, which can be beneficial for diabetes. |
| Heart health | If someone is not used to drinking caffeine and consuming 2 to 3 cups or more of caffeinated coffee a day, it may lead to increased blood pressure. People who drank coffee had a somewhat lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease than those who rarely drank it. Conservative consumption (1–3 cups of coffee per day) may decrease risk of heart attack. | If having difficulty controlling blood pressure, switch to decaffeinated coffee. Limit caffeinated coffee to around 2 cups per day. |
| Brain health | Drinking coffee may improve brain health and lower risk for depression and rate of brain function decline. | |
| Cancer | Consuming coffee may lower risk for certain types of cancer, such as liver, endometrial, aggressive prostate, and estrogen-negative breast cancer. | |
| Liver health | Coffee drinking may improve liver health and protect against liver cancer. | |
| Parkinson's disease | Coffee drinking may decrease risk for Parkinson's disease. | |

Examine Your Choices

| Special Health Considerations | What I Currently Drink | What I Can Change |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Diabetes | 3 cups sugar sweetened caffeinated coffee per day | Unsweetened or sugar-free sweetener, 1 cup caffeinated, 2 cups decaffeinated |
| Osteoporosis | 4 cups black, caffeinated coffee per day | Add milk/milk alternative to 1 cup or drink separately |
| Trouble sleeping | 3 cups caffeinated coffee per day | After 2 p.m., drink decaffeinated |

substances may be the active ingredients in coffee associated with lower rates of heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. Other substances in coffee, including kahweol, cafestol, lignans, and even caffeine, may lower the risk of certain cancers. The exact mechanisms of coffee to produce its health benefits remain mostly unknown. Although it is not necessarily recommended that everyone switch from their Earl Grey tea to a cup of java (coffee), some studies have found that coffee may provide some benefit.

Current Recommendations

Currently, no U.S. Dietary Guidelines exist for the exact amount each person should or should not be drinking. For the casual enjoyer of this brew, a general guideline is to reduce the amount if experiencing signs of drinking too much, such as tremors, sleeping problems, feeling stressed, increased heart rate, or feeling uncomfortable.

Additional Tips

Specialty coffee-based drinks are common, but they can be high in sugar, fat, and calories. For those who are not black-coffee purists, these can be enjoyed as a healthier treat by choosing low-fat milk options, sugar-free

syrops, or smaller portion sizes. If you are concerned about how much caffeine or how many calories you are consuming, fill your coffee mug up with water and then pour it into a liquid measuring cup to see how many ounces it holds. Most hold 16–20 ounces or more, which is 2 or more cups of coffee. To see if drinking coffee may be enjoyable and beneficial for your lifestyle and health needs, try making and experimenting with your own coffee drinks at home. It will also be cheaper!

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Vanilla Cafe au Lait

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup milk (1%, soy, almond)
- ¼ tsp sugar-free vanilla syrup
- ½ cup caffeinated or decaffeinated coffee

DIRECTIONS

1. Brew coffee.
2. Heat milk and add sugar-free vanilla syrup.
3. Add milk to coffee and enjoy!

