

COFFEE: TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK

As with many of life's pleasures, controversy abounds. It is certain that some people, who may be allergic or have life threatening aggravations to coffee, should abstain from any coffee. Others can seemingly tolerate unlimited amounts. However, for most people moderate amounts can contribute to the simple pleasures of the pallet without dire consequences. The key is quantity and quality.

There is much research concerning both the negative effects of coffee drinking as well as the benefits. Much of the press focuses on caffeine; however there are many other not so researched chemicals that contribute to both the negatives and the positives. Many of the Pro's and Con's, from various studies that can easily be found on the Internet, are listed below:

Cons

- Coffee is a central nervous system stimulator that gives the adrenals a kick and causes production of the stress handling hormone adrenalin and the production of more cortisol resulting in short term benefits of heightened awareness / alertness and more energy, but long term may result in a crash after each consumption to lower levels of energy than previously thereby necessitating another cup and another cup, etc. Thus, it may be addictive and ultimately may result in adrenal exhaustion.
- Even though coffee has never been conclusively linked to cancer, it does contain acknowledged carcinogens such as caffeine and other chemicals produced by the high heat of roasting such as creosote, pyridine, tars, and [polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons](#).
- Caffeine interferes with [adenosine](#), a brain chemical that normally has a calming effect.
- [Cortisol](#) levels are raised which in turn results in constriction of the blood vessels, harder pumping of the heart and higher blood pressure. (Constriction of blood vessels is also a benefit, see the next section.)
- The liver in fetuses and newborns cannot metabolize caffeine, so it remains in the body for up to four days stimulating the nervous system resulting in irritability and sleeplessness.
- Coffee has been associated with low birth weight, birth defects, miscarriages, premature birth, inability to conceive, and sluggish sperm.
- Many of the chemicals in coffee and decaf irritate the stomach lining causing an increase of stomach acid leading to digestive disorders.

- Coffee, including decaf, has high amounts of vitamin K, which affects coagulability of the blood – bad for people at risk of heart attack, stroke and blood clots.
- Decreases quality of sleep.
- Caffeine may cause problems with blood sugar control after meals for [type 2 diabetics](#).
- Coffee excites more rapid [peristaltic](#) movements of the intestines resulting in shorted transit times and less absorption of nutrients.
- Coffee hampers the absorption of essential minerals and vitamins such as magnesium, zinc, iron, potassium, and B's.
- Coffee contributes to [caries](#) in the teeth.
- Coffee stimulates more frequent urination and subsequent loss of various vitamins and minerals such as B, C, calcium, iron and zinc.
- Caffeine may aggravate osteoporosis by leaching calcium from the bones.
- Caffeine may increase intraocular pressure in persons with glaucoma.
- Coffee may interfere with proper levels of [homocysteine](#) and cholesterol by inhibiting vitamins folate, B12 or B6.
- Coffee is one of most heavily pesticide sprayed crops.
- Caffeine aggravates stress in people who drink it every day.

Pros

- There are scientific studies that refute most if not all of the above listed negative effects.
- Many of the old studies showing the bad effects of coffee may be attributed to not taking into account whether the person also smoked. In addition, coffee drinkers before 1975 used unfiltered and percolated coffee. After 1975, the filters for preparing coffee removed most of the chemicals, like [terpenes](#), that cause elevations in homocysteine and cholesterol resulting in better results. Also, early Finnish studies when people still drank boiled coffee had higher risk of rheumatoid arthritis. Later studies using coffee preparations other than boiled did not show an associated rheumatoid arthritis risk.

- Caffeine increases intellectual activity when fatigued or bored.
- Caffeine speeds up fat metabolism during exercise while conserving [glycogen](#) and [glucose](#) thereby maintaining brain activity and reducing hunger.
- Caffeine prevents crystallization of cholesterol and reduces risk of development of gallstones.
- Coffee has a protective effect against [cirrhosis](#) of the liver.
- Coffee has shown a protective effect against colon cancer likely due to enhanced colonic activity of the colon and [antimutagenic](#) components in coffee.
- Coffee may lower the incidence of Parkinson's disease due to high anti-oxidant activity.
- The [theophylline](#) in coffee may be protective against asthma.
- Coffee has four times the anti-oxidants of Green Tea, makes an excellent anti-depressant, and enhances performance and memory.
- Caffeine dilates the arteries of the brain and may counter migraines. (Caffeine is also a cause of migraines.)
- The FDA considers [caffeine](#) to be "Generally Recognized as Safe."
- Coffee may reduce the incidence of kidney stones by increasing the flow of urine and decreasing its concentration.
- Coffee lessens the incidence of bladder cancer in smokers due to its diuretic effect.
- Minerals like magnesium and antioxidants may contribute to coffee being shown to reduce the risk of [type 2 diabetes](#).
- Coffee has the ability to reduce the release of [histamine](#) from [mast cells](#) thereby having anti-allergic properties.

With all of these conflicting studies, it is apparent that common sense must prevail. To determine if you should even consider drinking coffee, evaluate the items below. If the answer is you are going to consider drinking it, then use kinesiology to see if it is appropriate. (See the last section.) And finally, if you do

drink coffee, follow the suggestions in the “Guidelines for Drinking Coffee” section below.

Do Not Drink Coffee Rules

- Do not drink coffee if you are pregnant or nursing.
- Avoid coffee if you have high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol, gall stones, or a tendency for blood clots or stroke.
- Do not drink coffee if you have mental illness, insomnia or anxiety.
- Avoid coffee if you have a coffee allergy or sensitivity or drug interaction issue.
- Avoid coffee if you get agitated or feel hyper or quivery inside after drinking.
- Do not drink coffee if you feel you must have a cup to wake up and get going and then need another cup later in the day to keep going. If this is your situation then begin to wean yourself off slowly and switch to tea.

Guidelines for Drinking Coffee

- Use organic coffee to avoid pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers.
- If you drink decaffeinated coffee, use the [Swiss Water Process](#) or some other decaffeinating process that does not employ chemicals.
- If you use filters, utilize unbleached filters to avoid leaching of chlorine from the bleached filters.
- Use lower caffeine coffees: [Arabica beans](#) have lower caffeine than [Robusta beans](#). Darker roasted beans also have less caffeine.
- Use brewing methods that expose coffee grounds to water for shorter periods of time. Percolated and French Press preparations use longer times and have more caffeine than standard drip methods or espresso machines (depending of course on the type of bean and method of roasting as well).
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Take a good vitamin/mineral supplement to replace lost electrolytes, minerals, and vitamins due to the diuretic effects.

- Do not drink coffee after meals because of the possible adverse blood sugar effects.
- Use coffees that have mitigating properties for many of the possible negative effects of coffee. For example, there is a coffee made from Arabica beans. It is roasted outside the US for lower acidity and with an extract of organic Ganoderma Lucidum (Reishi red mushroom) included that neutralizes some of the already lower caffeine levels and acts as an immune system enhancer with anti-viral, bacterial and fungal properties. This particular coffee in one of its forms usually tests well for most people except for those in the section above who should not drink coffee. For more information please contact Bob Shane at shanebob@msn.com.

Kinesiology Testing

Since coffee creates a dependency and an emotional attachment, it is very important to do your kinesiology testing double blind to avoid any unconscious bias in the data. Use the following guidelines to clarify your testing:

- Use the flow chart provided in an earlier lesson.
- Write your question clearly with the positive statement on one piece of paper and the negative on another. Fold the papers so neither the testee or testor know which question is being answered.
 - For example: “Drinking coffee is in my highest good.” “Drinking coffee is not in my highest good.”
- Regardless of the result, the question can be refined such as: “I can drink some type of coffee on a limited basis.” “I can not
- Using this type of questioning, you can identify the type of coffee, how it is to be prepared, how many cups per day or week, etc.
- When it gets to the point of identifying a brand of coffee, it is actually better to use real samples of the different coffees in unidentified envelopes to test.