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COOKING ON CAMPUS: TRICKS N'TREATS
10/31 @ 5:15-6:30pm at Outdoor Rec. Only \$7.
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Caffeine: is it really all that bad?

Caffeine is a mild central nervous system stimulant found in coffee beans, tea leaves, cocoa beans, and guarana seeds. Most experts recommend 400mg per day from all sources to get the benefits but not overdo it, depending on your (highly variable) individual caffeine sensitivity. They also note that the benefits from caffeine are negated by a lot of cream and sugar/syrups. Watch out for those caramel macchiatos and energy drinks!

As a quick reference, an 8 oz cup of regular coffee contains about 80-95mg of caffeine, tea 15-45mg, 12 oz cola drinks 40-50mg, and energy drinks 80-200mg. Check out this awesome list of the caffeine content of student-relevant foods and beverages at cspinet.org/eating-healthy/ingredients-of-concern/caffeine-chart. It's definitely worth a look.

Referred to as "the world's most popular drug," many studies are looking into the potential health impacts. Here's a summary of what scientists have learned so far:

CAFFEINE MAY HELP:

Sleep deprivation. Keeps the sleep-deprived more alert by binding to adenosine receptors in the brain, preventing adenosine, a natural sedative, from attaching, thereby delaying or decreasing drowsiness. Regular caffeine users may need an extra boost to get this benefit.

Mental stimulation. Increases alertness to better perform cognitive tasks (aka school and other work) in non-regular users. Regular users may get few, if any, benefits in their cognition.

Physical performance. Improves endurance exercise performance (running, biking, etc.), with less effect for weight lifting and sprints, by increasing fat metabolism slightly and reducing the sense of time to fatigue.

Headaches. Caffeine constricts blood vessels, which are often dilated when you have a headache, alleviating pain.

CAFFEINE MAY HURT:

Pregnancy. Research has not been able to rule out that more than 200mg of caffeine per day would be harmful to the fetus.

Getting good sleep. If not used mindfully, you can end up in a vicious cycle of poor sleep, requiring more caffeine to stay awake. Slow caffeine metabolizers can have sleep disruption even when they stop caffeine intake earlier in the day.

Mood. Overdoing it can produce anxiety, irritability, and a loss of concentration.

PROMISING OR NEUTRAL FINDINGS (more study needed):

Cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, weight control, Parkinson's disease, gallstones, Alzheimer's disease.



CAMPUS HEALTH

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Food and nutrition services (including healthy eating, cooking skills, weight management, digestive problems, hormonal and cardiovascular diseases, and eating disorders) are offered year-round at Campus Health. Call (520) 621-6483 to make an appointment.