

## But first, **COFFEE**

Many of us can't function in the morning until we've had that glorious first cup of coffee. But what happens when we need another coffee midmorning, one on our lunch break, and then another to get through the 3pm slump? Amanda Smith writes ...

The Chronicle · 31 Jan 2023 · 13 · Amanda Smith is an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) and Certified Fertility Dietitian at Verde Nutrition Co.

Research shows coffee does have some health benefits, including reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and potentially boosting longevity. These benefits are largely thanks to the polyphenol content. So, more coffee equals greater benefits, right? Unfortunately, this isn't the case. From one coffee lover to another, here is everything you need to know about your caffeine consumption.



### KNOW YOUR LIMIT

The caffeine content of coffee varies considerably, depending on the type of bean used and how the coffee is extracted. As a rough guide, a standard shot of barista coffee will contain 80-85mg of coffee. For most healthy adults, the recommended caffeine intake is less than 400mg per day – around four small coffees. Keep in mind this would be the limit if your daily intake was only com-

ing from coffee. Remember other sources can be surprisingly potent, including tea (50mg per cup), energy drinks (80mg per can) and dark chocolate (95mg per 100g).

#### CUT BACK FOR BABY

One of the main groups who need to cap their coffee intake is women who are pregnant, trying to conceive or breastfeeding. In these circumstances, it's recommended to limit your intake to less than 200 mg per day.

Other people who would benefit from consuming less coffee would be those with issues such as diarrhoea, reflux, nausea, constipation, abdominal pain or bloating. This is due to caffeine being a known gut irritant that can cause or exacerbate these symptoms.

Individuals who struggle to sleep, experience anxiety or are just sensitive to caffeine would also benefit from reducing their coffee intake. It can take up to 12 hours for your body to metabolise caffeine, so if you drink coffee in the afternoon, it's likely to impact your sleep that night. This may be time taken to fall asleep, sleep quality or duration.

#### WITHDRAWAL METHOD ...

If you're reading this thinking you need to cut back on coffee, avoid going cold turkey unless you want the unpleasant side effects of caffeine withdrawals such as headaches and irritability. Some tips to reduce coffee intake include:

Periodise coffee in the morning and swap to decaf or herbal from midday onwards. Reduce the size of your coffee.

Cut back gradually. If you're currently having five coffees per day, cut back to four per day for a week, then three, and so on.