- Caffeine



*Did you know?*

**Decaffeinated coffee is not 100% caffeine-free. It's made from normal coffee beans processed to remove the majority of the natural caffeine, so should contain only 0.3% caffeine or less.**

# Too much CAFFEINE?

*Your daily fix could be having an impact on your body and mind without you realising it*

**Relying on double espressos to beat the January slump? Spending too much money at your local coffee shop? Or maybe you're unknowingly getting your hit from 'hidden' caffeine in your favourite snacks. If you're feeling jittery during the day and exhausted by the evening but you're unable to nod off at night, or you're having heart palpitations, it might be time to rethink. Our quiz will help you discover just how much caffeine you're having each day – with expert tips on how to make your habit healthier.**



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# TAKE THE TEST

**Grab a pen and circle the answers that best describe you.**

**1 HOW DOES YOUR DAY USUALLY START?**
- ■ Don't talk to me until I've had an Americano.
- ▲ Bit blurry until I've brewed my first green tea.
- ● Some days good, some days bad.
- ◆ Fine – I'm bright-eyed first thing.

**2 HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH A MID-AFTERNOON ENERGY SLUMP?**
- ■ I have a coffee-shop latte.
- ▲ I can't resist a fizzy drink and a chocolate bar.
- ● A creamy, sweet cup of tea or coffee does the trick.
- ◆ I go for a walk around the block.

**3 HOW DO YOU LIKE TO TAKE YOUR COFFEE?**
- ■ The stronger the better.
- ▲ I prefer a cup of tea.
- ● Plenty of milk and with a tasty syrup.
- ◆ I don't really like coffee.

**4 HOW DOES YOUR LOCAL COFFEE SHOP TREAT YOU?**
- ■ With a warm welcome – I almost live there.
- ▲ With bemusement when I keep ordering matcha tea.
- ● They love me – with my wacky requests for offbeat syrups.
- ◆ No idea – never been there.

**5 HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU GO TO BED AT NIGHT?**
- ■ Wired and unable to sleep.
- ▲ I often can't nod off so I get up and make myself a soothing hot chocolate.
- ● It depends – some days tired, others wired.
- ◆ Sleepy and ready for bed.



# THE RESULTS

**Tot up your score and check below to find out how you did**

## MOSTLY ■

**YOU'RE A... COFFEE FIEND**

Too much caffeine can cause insomnia, headaches, heartburn and anxiety, as well as irritating your bladder. 'Limit your intake to about 400mg a day,' advises GP Dr Sarah Jarvis. That's four cups of coffee or eight cups of tea. 'Caffeine can also induce palpitations and cause quick rises in blood pressure,' warns GP Dr Dave Nichol. Swap to decaf or slow-release caffeine, such as matcha. 'You'll feel alert for longer,' says Dr Nichol. Wean off slowly, otherwise you risk rebound headaches. Cut weekly consumption by a quarter until you reach a healthy level.

## MOSTLY ▲

**YOU'RE A... STEALTH DRINKER**

You could be having more caffeine than you realise because it's not just found in coffee. It's often also in tea (including 'healthy' green and matcha), chocolate, soft drinks and energy drinks, plus some painkillers and herbal remedies. Read labels carefully and keep a caffeine diary to see how much you're really having and when. Afternoon energy slump? Perk up with a 15-minute walk instead of a caffeine hit. Trouble sleeping? Avoid caffeine just before bed. 'Try cutting caffeine out completely from lunchtime onwards,' says Dr Jarvis.

## MOSTLY ●

**YOU'RE A... CONTROLLED CONSUMER**

You may have tabs on your caffeine levels, but those added extras might not be great for your health. 'It's probably more important to think about how you take your coffee,' says British Heart Foundation dietician Victoria Taylor. 'Sugar, syrups, whole milk and cream add calories and saturated fat that could cause weight gain and increase cholesterol levels.' So ditch the sugar or syrup if you normally have it. Swap whole milk for skimmed or semi-skimmed. And remember that the effects of caffeine can last for up to seven hours, so if you have trouble sleeping, stick to consuming caffeinated drinks in the mornings only.

## MOSTLY ◆

**YOU'RE A... CONSCIOUS SIPPER**

Sounds like you keep caffeine levels low, but a little bit can be good for you too – in fact, three cups of tea a day could slow down biological ageing and extend your life*. 'Plus, it can increase alertness, energy and mental performance,' says dietician Jenaed Brodell. But moderation is key – and it can be tricky to monitor your intake, particularly if you're buying from cafes. 'Concentration of caffeine varies,' says Jenaed. 'For example, a cup of coffee from your favourite barista may contain anywhere between 100mg and 300mg of caffeine.' You might want to check out caffeine content on your favourite coffee chain's website.



## Know your numbers

**Get clued up on the caffeine content of your favourites. Each serving has approx...**

- ✱ Brewed coffee: 80-100mg
- ✱ Black tea: 47mg
- ✱ Green tea: 33mg
- ✱ Matcha tea: 35mg
- ✱ Can of cola: 33mg
- ✱ 44g of milk chocolate: 8.8mg



PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY. *STUDY IN CHINA, PUBLISHED 2023. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP



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