



COFFEE & BISCOTTI PRESENTS:

# Watching Your Daily Caffeine Intake

*A simple guide for healthy coffee  
drinkers*

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# Watching Your Daily Caffeine Intake

## *A Simple Guide for Healthy Coffee Drinkers*

You may have a medical condition that demands you keep your daily caffeine intake down to a certain level. Or perhaps you just want to watch your caffeine intake as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Whatever the reason, this guide should help you with your efforts. It's not that complicated to adopt a healthy lifestyle as a coffee drinker.

### **Just do three simple steps:**

1. Figure out what your daily intake goal is.
2. Figure out what you normally take in.
3. Adjust your routine to meet your goal.

### **Simple doesn't always mean easy. There's some work involved. Caffeine is a natural substance in many foods and liquids.**

Like chocolate. The darker the chocolate, the higher the caffeine count. Anything with chocolate will have caffeine.

- Candy bars can have 10-30mg caffeine
- Ice cream and Yogurt can have up to 45mg caffeine from coffee or chocolate
- Breakfast cereals can have 10mg caffeine or so in them
- Hot cocoa has about 9mg caffeine
- Chocolate Pudding can have about 10mg caffeine

Even some over the counter medications have caffeine added in them. Caffeine is a natural diuretic and helps the performance of some pain medications.

### **What should your normal caffeine intake goal be?**

If you're looking for a healthy lifestyle goal, the fed guidelines, WHO, and Canadian Health Organization all say the same thing. That up to 400mg caffeine can safely be a good part of a healthy lifestyle.

Now, in the context of these reports, they're talking about coffee. I do not see in the wording as to how other sources of caffeine affects this amount. I would assume that 400mg a day in total caffeine intake is a safe goal for most healthy individuals.

Note: Everyone reacts differently to caffeine. Some are not sensitive at all to caffeine, while others are very sensitive. You should get your doctor's help determining what your goal is.

If you're sensitive to caffeine and feel you need a lower amount, whether it's just for sensitivity to jitters or if you have a medical condition, half that amount may work for you. The same organizations recommend that pregnant women keep their caffeine intake down to 200mg per day.

While I battled extremely high blood pressure I kept my intake down to 200mg per day and it worked well for me. Then since the months I've maintained a constant normal range for blood pressure, I have made my goal 300mg per day. I do allow myself 400mg per day on extra heavy workdays without side effects.

Through all this, I maintained my regular doctor appointments and coordinated my nutritional efforts with those of the doctor's medication efforts. ALWAYS rely on your doctor's advice in your case and do not self-medicate or treat yourself without your doctor's help.

I will note that the doctor who helped me make the most progress in my blood pressure journey also had me on a good vitamin regimen as well as diet and exercise. Watching your caffeine level is just one part of a healthy lifestyle.

### **Caffeine in Your Coffee**

Most home brewed cups of coffee will have 85-100 mg of caffeine per 8 ounces. I suggest counting each one as 100mg. Rarely does our normal coffee cup hold just 8 ounces. Most hold 10-12 ounces.

If you drink a brand of coffee regularly from the store shelf, google that brand of coffee and caffeine. You may get lucky and find a 3<sup>rd</sup> party who has measured the caffeine level in that coffee.

If you get your coffee from a local roaster, ask if they know the caffeine count. Read descriptions if you order from a roaster online.

There's been a lot of different methods used that make caffeine counts vary. This is why so many charts show a range from 85mg to a lot higher than I say for an 8 ounce cup of coffee. One cannot be so sure any longer.

Here's one article I found that explains how this variation happens:

<https://www.roastycoffee.com/caffeine/>

If you want to be sure you're getting a lower amount of caffeine in your home brewed coffee so you can safely drink your desired amount, try mixing. Specifically, ask your roaster for half full caffeinated beans and half decaf beans in your coffee.

You can get half full caffeinated and half decaf of the same single origin or you can mix the origins. My favorite is to mix full caffeinated Panama with decaf Guatemala. This makes a nice half caffeine level coffee.

### Caffeine in Other Drinks

In the resource section you will find a lot of charts listing the caffeine levels in drinks people buy. This includes sodas and energy drinks. Even teas.

Use those resources to understand the caffeine levels of your regular drinks.

Oftentimes, there are better reasons for giving up those drinks than caffeine. I turned my back on sodas over three years ago and haven't regretted it once.

And don't get me started on energy drinks. I have a personal opinion that those things should be banned. When it comes to caffeine, FDA imposes a limit on sodas, but energy drinks get free reign.

The number of kids grabbing those energy drinks off the shelf, and how adults down multiple servings of the stuff makes me sick.

Another thing to note about servings. Read the cans. Often the can will have more than one serving in it, yet we drink the whole thing, getting a lot more caffeine in than just one serving. Be aware of what you're drinking.

Here's an article on energy drinks from the American College of Cardiology for further reading: <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2018/02/28/10/46/stimulant-containing-energy-drinks>

Also here is FDA's warning about too much caffeine. <https://www.fda.gov/food/dietary-supplement-products-ingredients/pure-and-highly-concentrated-caffeine>

When you reach adult age your body is mature enough to handle caffeine. How much is between you and your doctor. Listen to your body and listen to your doctor.

**Use what you feel, know, and see to decide your daily caffeine intake goal.**

### **But what do you drink and eat with caffeine normally?**

Sit down and make a list of everything you eat and drink that contains caffeine. Use the resources in this paper to determine how much you normally take in.

Is this amount more than your goal?

If so, figure out what to cut back on and get it down to your goal. Some of the resources will help you find alternative drinks too.

Take note of serving sizes when reading caffeine counts. Adjust for what you normally drink in one sitting.

If coffee is a large portion of your caffeine intake, what will going to half caffeine coffee achieve? Coffee in itself is full of anti-oxidants, plus there's other health benefits to coffee that are not reliant upon the caffeine.

I'll include a few links to health benefits of coffee in the resources.

The trick is to listen to your body and understand what is too much for you as an individual. If you get jitters easily, gut pains, or have to rush to the bathroom in an embarrassing fashion after drinking coffee, you may be sensitive.

If you have a strong resistance to caffeine, then it's up to you to use your brain and be logical about your caffeine intake. In your case your body may not let you know when you've had too much. I'd suggest making sure you stick with the 400mg daily intake.

My husband is like that. He could drink two ten-cup pots of coffee a day and not notice anything.

To protect him, we've started this routine where the second pot of coffee of the day is decaf. Plus, we've started keeping other healthy drinks in the house to switch to by late afternoon, such as teas, infused waters, and gaterade-style drinks.

I make a very healthy and addicting orange/lemon juice shake up sometimes too.

Some alternatives I've adapted for myself have been:

- Hibiscus tea (good for blood pressure)
- Beet juice (good for blood pressure)
- Green juice (homemade is best, spinach is the base)
- Water (I had to increase my intake as part of my goal)
- Dragon Drink (I've switched my second drink to this during my Starbucks workdays. Coconut milk is good for you and this is the only way I've found to get it in. Love coconut, but I can't stand coconut milk straight or in coffee at all.)
- Infused waters (my favorite is watermelon and rosemary from the garden)

Even with substitutions, I still get 2-3 cups of coffee in per day on the slow days and four cups on the heavy workdays. This gives me a count of 300mg caffeine and 400mg caffeine per day respectively.

In my case, I don't have much in the way of foods with caffeine in them to consider. But when I do, I count them as one of my coffees and drink a little less, or switch to decaf earlier. It's easy for me because I keep decaf cold brew on hand at all times.

Play around with different healthy drinks for yourself and freely enjoy your daily coffee moment when it happens. Brew healthy and happy!

Online resources for caffeine counts:

Center for Science in the Public Interest – this site gets into being more sensitive about things than I do, but it's got a great caffeine chart on it. Reading it is a real eye-opener for many about just how prominent caffeine is around us. Also, a good way to find alternatives.

<https://cspinet.org/eating-healthy/ingredients-of-concern/caffeine-chart>

List on the Mayo Clinic's website

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/caffeine/art-20049372>

Huge list of caffeine counts at caffeine informer:

<https://www.caffeineinformer.com/the-caffeine-database>

Online resources of health benefits of coffee:

Very instructive article from Medical News Today

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/270202.php>

Article from Mayo Clinic

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/coffee-and-health/faq-20058339>

Article at Scientific American

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-health-benefits-of-coffee/>

Notations used for what is acceptable caffeine intake:

Mayo Clinic article on caffeine

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/caffeine/art-20045678>

FDA Consumer update on caffeine

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/spilling-beans-how-much-caffeine-too-much>

Medical News Today article on how much coffee is too much for your heart (note how much they're counting a cup of coffee as and keep that in mind)

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/325200.php>

Visit me often at Coffee & Biscotti <http://www.coffeeandbiscotti.com> for ways to drink coffee responsibly as part of a healthy lifestyle. I post reviews on coffee, coffee products and tools, and even alternatives to coffee.

Until we meet again, enjoy life!

Diana Cacy Hawkins

Your Energized Coffee Writer

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