

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Clarifying The Caffeine Controversies

(NAPSA)—Found in coffee, tea, chocolate and some soft drinks, caffeine is one of the most extensively studied ingredients in food—its relationship to health has been the subject of research for the past two decades. Recent research even suggests caffeine consumption may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Experts agree moderation and common sense are key to safe caffeine consumption. For most adults, this means about 300 milligrams, the amount in three 6-oz cups of coffee or six 6-oz cups of tea.

Even with all the research supporting the safety and possible benefits of caffeine, misperceptions remain. For example:

Myth: Caffeine causes high blood pressure. Some people may experience a temporary and modest rise in blood pressure. Individuals with hypertension should consult a physician about caffeine intake; however, caffeine does not cause chronic hypertension and moderate consumption is not associated with increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

Myth: Caffeine causes dehydration. Research has found that the minimal diuretic effects of caffeine don't compromise overall body hydration. The National Academy of Sciences said caffeinated beverages can count toward total daily fluid intake.

Myth: Caffeine can be addictive. Although caffeine is sometimes characterized as "addictive," medical experts agree caffeine consumption is safe and should not be classified with addictive drugs of abuse. Some sensitive individuals may experience mild, temporary headache, restlessness or irritabil-



A number of popular myths about caffeine and health can be far from the truth.

ity when caffeine intake is quickly and substantially reduced. This can be avoided by progressively decreasing intake over a few days.

Myth: There's a link between caffeine and bone health. Research shows that moderate caffeine intake is not a threat to bone health or calcium balance when adequate calcium is consumed. Healthy adults need 1,000 to 1,200 mg calcium a day (found in three to four cups milk or yogurt).

Myth: Caffeine improves intelligence. It won't make you smarter, but caffeine in moderation may increase alertness in tired individuals and have a positive effect on both mental and physical performance.

To learn more about caffeine and health, visit the International Food Information Council Foundation at <http://ifc.org> and search "caffeine."