

Caffeine's affect on weight loss



Obesity is a wide-spread and increasing public health problem. Obesity is associated with negative health impact and elevated mortality. The lethal effects of extreme obesity on a good quality of life and psychosocial functioning have been well researched.

Diabetes, heart disease, sleep problems, too much fat in your blood, intestinal disease, low self worth, depression are just some of the big problems with being obese. While there are many reasons for obesity, we'll look at one area that many folks might not understand.

Research has found that caffeine and coffee negatively affects many of these health conditions that are prevalent in overweight people. Additionally, both caffeine and coffee contribute to increased appetite that thwarts the efforts of people on diets to stick to their regime. Since caffeine is a stimulant, it is thought that it enhances fat metabolism and encourages weight loss. Many people believe their daily mug of coffee or other caffeinated drink helps them to lose weight or keep weight off. However, the diuretic effect of caffeine is what appears to create weight loss, and this causes loss of water, not fat.

Caffeine in **coffee elevates the stress hormones** cortisol, epinephrine (also known as adrenaline) and norepinephrine. These hormones are responsible for increased heart rate and blood pressure, and a sense of "emergency alert". Circulation of oxygen to the brain and extremities is decreased and the immune system is suppressed. **Increased cortisol levels lead to abdominal obesity** Chronically elevated blood cortisol levels that are caused by frequent stress or regular caffeine or coffee intake lead to an increased buildup of fat in the abdominal area. **Increased stress leads to overeating. Elevation of stress hormones leads to fat cravings.**

Additionally, **caffeine stimulates your appetite.** Although caffeine is included as an ingredient in many weight-loss aids, it actually stimulates appetite, and organizations including the Mayo Clinic discourage the use of caffeine as a weight-loss aid. Caffeine triggers hypoglycemia through the activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the adrenal glands, causing an immediate and sustained constriction of blood vessels, decreased circulation to the brain and a heightened feeling of low blood sugar. The body's reaction to hypoglycemia results in food cravings and increased appetite. People often crave higher fat foods resulting in increased caloric intake, further interfering with the body's ability to maintain a healthy weight.

Finally, **caffeine interferes with GABA metabolism.** GABA (Gamma-aminobutyric acid) is a neurotransmitter naturally produced in the brain and nervous system as well as the heart. It plays an important role in mood and stress management and influences a person's sense of well-being. Caffeine has been found to interfere with binding of GABA to GABA receptors, preventing it from performing its calming function. GABA's role in stress management is compromised in the presence of caffeine, and increased physiological and psychological stress lead to overeating as well as difficulties losing weight.

Individuals who are trying to lose weight would do well to pass on the coffee. *--David Charleston*