

# Alternatives to Caffeine

\* If you decide to cut down your caffeine consumption, consider coffee substitutes other than beverages. Many people say coffee "gets them going" in the morning. But a short run, 15 minutes of yoga or a brief meditation session may have the same effect.

\* If you decide to eliminate caffeine altogether, consider tapering off. If you stop "cold turkey", you may experience a headache or morning drowsiness for as long as a week, depending on how heavy a coffee drinker you were.

\* If you find a hot morning drink a satisfying part of your wake-up routine, a switch from coffee to tea might be a good way to taper down. The average cup of tea contains less than half the caffeine of a cup of brewed coffee. Most herbal teas don't contain any caffeine and may be an even better alternative.

**HERBAL TEAS:** Some favorites are camomile, spearmint, peppermint, jasmine, and rose hips. Most of these teas don't contain caffeine and are delicious cold as well as hot. Some herbal teas do contain added caffeine, so be sure to read the label.

**WATER:** Water is needed by the body for all its mechanical and chemical processes. It is important to include at least 6 glasses of water a day, in addition to water derived from other food and beverages. A glass of cold, clear ice water is an excellent substitute for iced tea or cola drink, and may provide the emotional pick-up of coffee.

**FRUIT JUICES:** Another good alternative is unsweetened fruit juice such as apple, orange, grapefruit, or grape.

\* It's easier for one member of a family to make a change in caffeine consumption if others in the household do likewise. You might ask your housemates for support in your efforts to cut back. One way to do this is to make all the coffee in your house decaffeinated (the pure water process is preferable to the solvent method).

\* We encourage you to experiment with your caffeine intake. In doing so, you may discover some ways to increase your energy naturally and improve the quality of your life!

## The End of the Story

While an occasional cup of coffee isn't particularly harmful, the effects of a high caffeine intake (over 300 mgs.) can cause health problems. There are healthier alternatives that will increase your energy and sharpen your senses without the nervousness and other effects of caffeine. If you're concerned about your health, you owe it to yourself to look again at your use of caffeine and decide whether it's time to make a change.

## How Much Caffeine?—Compare for Yourself!

Source	Caffeine (Milligrams)	Amount
<b>Coffee</b>		
Brewed	110-150	5 ounces
Instant	66	
Decaffeinated	3	
<b>Tea</b>		
Black or Green Leaf	70	5 ounces
Herbal	Negligible	
<b>*Soft Drinks</b>		
Coca Cola	65	12 ounces
Dr. Pepper	61	
Mountain Dew	55	
Tab	49	
Diet Rite	32	
<b>Chocolate</b>		
Cocoa	42-50	5 ounces
Milk Chocolate	31	1 ounce
<b>Medications</b>		
Anacin, Midol	32-50	
Coricidin D, Empirin		
Excedrin	66	1 tablet or
No Doz	100	capsule
Dexatrim	200	
Prolamine	140	

\* Caffeine is added to nearly 70% of all carbonated soft drinks sold in the U.S.

## Caffeine & Pregnancy

Like most drugs, caffeine enters the bloodstream and crosses the placental barrier to reach the unborn child. Evidence is mounting that caffeine may cause birth defects, such as cleft palate, miscarriages, and breech births when taken in high dosages during pregnancy.

As a reasonable precaution, some doctors are now advising women to reduce or totally eliminate caffeine consumption during the first 3 months of pregnancy when these defects are most likely to occur. In 1980, the Food and Drug Administration advised women, "If you're pregnant, you'd probably be wise to avoid caffeine."

