

WEEKLY WELLNESS AND COUNSELING NEWSLETTER

THE MID SEMESTER GRIND: CAFFEINE AND YOUR HEALTH

OCTOBER 19TH, 2020



FEELING THE GRIND

You are officially halfway through the semester.

CONGRATS! This has not been an easy semester thus far. At this point, you may be feeling the "mid-semester grind"

(especially since you didn't get that Fall Break!) You may be feeling the pressure and high demands of your classes - it's pretty typical for students to report feeling extremely stressed this time of the year.

You may feel like you are running on fumes- and that Pumpkin Spice Latte is starting to sound really good right about now... but could your caffeine use be making you feel *worse*?

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant. It is the world's most widely used psychoactive drug. 80% of Americans consume caffeine every day. Some common sources of caffeine include coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, energy drinks, and even exercise supplements. Caffeine is in so many different products that you may not even realize how much you are consuming in a typical day!

Caffeine can give you the little boost that you need to get through that essay- but too much caffeine can cause muscle aches, confusion, headaches, irritability, rapid heart beat, diarrhea, increased blood pressure and the jitters. Yikes!

Caffeine can also impact mental health. If you are experiencing anxiety, caffeine can make it worse. This can happen because caffeine activates the body's fight or flight response. If you're already worrying about midterm exams...that extra cup of coffee or that warm cup of tea may not be the way to go.

CAFFEINE CONTENT

16oz Wawa Cold Brew- 290mg
Grande Starbucks Pike Roast- 310mg
Grande Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte- 150mg
Medium Dunkin Donuts Iced Coffee- 297mg
2oz 5 Hour Energy Shot- 215mg
Can of Red Bull- 111mg
Can of Monster- 86mg
Can of Coke- 34mg (Diet Coke- 46mg)
Cup of black tea- 47mg
Cup of green tea- 25mg
Hersheys chocolate bar- 9mg



FACTS ABOUT CAFFEINE

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine states that it takes about 30-60 minutes for caffeine to reach its peak level in your blood. Your body eliminates half of the caffeine in your blood stream after 3-5 hours, but the rest can linger up to 14 hours!

Some studies show a correlation between caffeine consumption and a decreased likelihood of getting Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease.

Once caffeine reaches your stomach, it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to start feeling the effects.

Caffeine works by blocking the reuptake of adenosine, the neurotransmitter that tells your brain you're tired.

Caffeine can increase athletic ability by 3% by increasing the amount of calcium released inside your muscles. This lets your muscles work harder.

Caffeine is a drug- and this means that you can experience caffeine withdrawal. Withdrawal symptoms include concentration problems, headaches, and even flu-like symptoms.

NATURAL WAYS TO BOOST YOUR ENERGY

Did you know you can boost your energy both long and short term naturally? Here are some tips to get your energy levels up so you can rock the last half of the semester:

1. **Eat for energy**- It's better to eat many small meals throughout the day instead of three large meals. Eating low glycemic foods (foods that have sugars that are digested slowly) will help you avoid the midday energy lag. Foods with a low glycemic index include whole grains, high-fiber vegetables, nuts, and healthy oils
2. **Drink water and limit alcohol** - If you are dehydrated, one of the first signs is fatigue. According to the Mayo Clinic, men should get about 3.7 liters of water a day, and women should get 2.7 liters a day
3. **Exercise**- It may sound counter-intuitive, but exercise increases oxygen circulation and helps us sleep better at night. (The perfect recipe for energy the next day!)
4. **Decrease Stress**- Talk to your friends or family, seek counseling, meditate, practice mindfulness, take time for self-care. All of these things will leave you feeling rejuvenated



MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

Mindfully eat a snack- Next time you grab a snack, eat slowly. Really taste your food, feel the different textures. Engage all of your senses and savor each bite.

Mindful breathing- set a timer on your phone for one minute and just focus on your breathing. Are you breathing in through your mouth or nose? Do you feel your belly expanding with your inhale? Is your breath cool or warm? If you notice your mind wandering, gently bring it back to focusing on your breath.

An Aspiration- Ask yourself the question "what is my aspiration?" Pause for 20 seconds and see what comes to you. Write it down and place it somewhere where you can see.