

What's in Your Decaffeinated Coffee?



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Coffee plants that produce decaffeinated coffee beans are grown and harvested separately from those which contain caffeine. Sounds like a nice idea, but 80% of decaf coffee beans go through a harsh chemical process to have its caffeinated properties stripped away. If you think switching from leaded to unleaded is the safer way to go, think again. Decaf coffee holds as many threats as regular.

The solvent process of removing caffeine from coffee is actually relatively effective. It removes 96%-98% of the caffeine in the seed, and preserves the desired taste of the brew. However the main solvents used have shown to be harmful in laboratory studies. Methylene chloride, an effective paint remover, is clearly a safe solvent choice for caffeine removal. This synthetic chemical solvent is made by chlorinating methane gas. Although the residue of this chemical left behind after the decaffeination process is considered to be safe, methylene chloride has been considered to be a human carcinogenic. It is quickly absorbed into different organs and tissues, as well as crosses the blood brain barrier. It negatively affects speech, hand-eye coordination, and induces a lightheaded feeling. Ethyl Acetate is another commonly

used solvent used to decaffeinate coffee beans. Sound familiar? It's in bold letters on your bottle of nail polish remover. Ethyl Acetate is used in place of methylene chloride to produce "naturally decaffeinated" beverages. It's called "natural" because this chemical exists in nature in some fruits, but the chemical used to decaffeinate is most often "created".

Not all methods are created equal. The Swiss Water Process of decaffeination is solvent free. It begins by soaking unroasted beans in hot water letting the caffeine, along with the decadent coffee flavor, seep out of the bean. Now that these beans no longer contain flavor or caffeine, they are entirely useless; and so they are discarded. The caffeine is then removed from the water by using a natural carbon filter. What is left is water saturated with flavor. Introduce bean batch number two, where only caffeine and not flavor will leave the bean. Viola, solvent-free decaf. While this method is completely safe, it is somewhat costly. Extracted caffeine from solvent methods can be resold separately, therefore making it more cost effective.

Method of decaffeination aside, take into consideration that an entirely different bean is used for decaffeinated coffee. Any method of removing caffeine also sweeps away the flavor, so bolder stronger beans are used to compensate for lost flavor. Robusta beans are the most commonly used. Although these beans reserve the desired flavor, they also contain a high concentration of fats called diptenes, which raise the amount of bad cholesterol in the blood. Someone who drinks decaf on a

regular basis can realistically lower their cholesterol approximately 10 points by cutting out the joe altogether.

Low octane java drinkers can also expect unsavory metabolic changes. The high acidity levels in decaf coffee exacerbate acid reflux. It also obstructs the absorption of critical minerals; iron, calcium, and magnesium. This can lead to a frailty in bone density, as well as anemia. Decaf coffee can affect the sympathetic nervous system just as much as regular coffee, resulting in lightheadedness, jitters, tremors and nervous activity.

You can learn about the individual dangers of consuming caffeine as pointed out in nutritional expert Barbara Ann Grova's article

(<http://www.516ads.com/articles/Feb2010/Feb%20ART%20Barbara%20Ann%20Grover.pdf>).

For those of you who are addicted to your morning brew, switching to a decaf blend for your health is a mediocre choice at best. Completely ditch the bean juice and you will avoid the side effects of chemical solvents, lower your cholesterol and be jitter free.

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