



Diabetes
New Zealand

The taste of coffee

The French start their day with a café au lait, the Italians with an espresso, and many New Zealanders kick-off the weekend with a bowl of latte. New Zealand Registered Dietitian **Alison Pask** gives some tidbits about coffee, advice about caffeine, and a guide to the names on café blackboards and menus.

Did you know coffee is like wine? The flavour is affected by where it is grown. Each region's coffee has its own unique taste, depending on factors such as rainfall, soil type and altitude.

A cup of coffee can make you feel more alert without doing any harm. But if you find you need increasing amounts of coffee to get you through the day, perhaps you should think about another beverage - water comes highly recommended!

Alternatively, it might be time for a review of your diet. Your body may need more carbohydrate for energy. Regular exercise will also help to boost your energy levels.

Coffee advice

- Like most things that we love to consume, when it comes to coffee, the key message is moderation.
- Drinking coffee can sometimes be a habit. Does that sound like you? Perhaps you could go for a walk instead of drinking that extra cup of coffee? If you are thirsty, water is by far and away the best thirst quencher.
- Coffee contains caffeine and can cause sleeplessness, palpitations and tremors.
- Caffeine is a diuretic, which means it encourages the body to excrete water. This has been demonstrated in tests where a strong coffee has been shown to increase the amount of urine passed.
- However, there is also evidence to show that when consumed in moderation, the body gets used to the amount of coffee without affecting the water balance.

What is a moderate coffee intake?

Three to six cups of instant coffee per day or one to two cups of freshly brewed coffee per day.

Tea - a healthier alternative

Tea, in comparison to coffee, is thought to be better for you. Tea contains flavonoids which act as antioxidants, which are known to protect from heart disease.

The addition of milk doesn't appear to affect the flavonoids in the body. Tea also has less caffeine than coffee.

When it comes to coffee, the key message is moderation



Café lingo

What do the different coffees on the café menu actually contain?

All varieties start with a basic espresso made with 30mls water and 7-9g coffee.

Short black: a single shot of espresso made with 30mls water

Long black: a single shot of espresso topped with extra hot water

Flat white: a single shot of espresso topped up with steamed milk

Cappuccino: a single shot of espresso topped up with equal amounts of hot milk and foam

Latte: usually served in a big bowl, cup or glass and contains a double shot of espresso topped up with plenty of hot steamed milk and a little froth.

Iced coffee made with cream and ice-cream could have up to 200 calories, not to mention the saturated fat. This is best left on the menu board. As an alternative, try an iced espresso or a coffee flavoured, low fat milk drink.

Adding sugar to your coffee is not recommended. Every teaspoon of sugar is an extra 5g of carbohydrate and another 20 calories. Ask for an artificial sweetener instead.

It's a good idea to have some artificial sweetener in your wallet or handbag. Better still, enjoy the flavour of coffee without sweetener!

Coffee advice

- Milky coffees such as lattes and cappuccinos can be higher in fat because they use more milk.
- If you are watching your weight, ask for trim milk to reduce the fat and calorie content.

Ask for trim milk and use artificial sweetener if necessary



Coffee titbit

To preserve the fresh flavour, store coffee in an airtight container, out of direct sunlight and in a cool, dark place. But not in the fridge!

Key points

- Ask for trim milk
- Use artificial sweetener if necessary
- Limit daily consumption
- Look at drinking more water to quench thirst.