Is Caffeine Addictive?

Written by: Peter Clapp, Ph.D., The Denver Post, YourHub Newspaper
Submitted by: Jodi D., GSE Staff

If you’re anything like me, there’s nothing better than waking up to the smell of a freshly brewed pot of coffee. In fact, you might say I can’t function in the morning until I’ve had my first cup. I’ve made a pleasant routine of seeking, acquiring and consuming coffee – but is my daily morning habit actually an addiction?

Caffeine is the most widely consumed psychoactive (meaning that it affects the way the brain works) substance in the world. The average American consumes about 250 mg a day, which is roughly the amount contained in two to three home-brewed cups of coffee. Beyond being regarded as safe by the Federal Drug Administration, and even considered part of a healthy diet by the Department of Health and Human Services, what makes coffee so attractive?

There’s plenty of evidence that the caffeine in a cup of coffee will make you more mentally alert. The reason for this is the effect caffeine has on a molecule in your brain called adenosine. Adenosine builds up throughout the day as your cells use energy to keep you going. At night, adenosine works in the parts of your brain that promote sleep. Caffeine blocks the activity of adenosine, which is why a cup of coffee after dinner may interfere with healthy sleep.

If you regularly drink multiple cups of coffee, black tea or energy drinks containing caffeine, you may notice that the effects on mental alertness are reduced. Over time, you can develop tolerance to the effects of caffeine in the brain. This tolerance may not seem like a big deal until you stop drinking your favorite caffeinated beverage, which is when the underlying cause of the tolerance shows up as caffeine withdrawal.

Regular consumers who abruptly stop drinking coffee may experience headaches as a symptom of withdrawal that is linked to physical dependence. But caution is advised here: Physical dependence is not the same as addiction.

Substances that are well-known for having addictive properties, like alcohol and opioid pain-relievers, also produce physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms. But these substances do something that caffeine does not: They directly stimulate the brain’s reward pathway by releasing a transmitter molecule called dopamine. Reward signals in the brain are nature’s way of reinforcing behaviors that are considered good in an evolutionary sense, like eating, exercise and sex. Opioids and alcohol, among others, trick your brain into believing that consuming these substances is good for you.

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Spiritual Life Reminders
Written by: Chaplain Aram, GSE Staff

Scripture Study: Join us from 10:15 AM–10:45 AM every Tuesday. We ponder and discuss the Gospel text for the coming Sunday. *Check the daily calendar postings as location sometimes varies, and may change depending on construction.

Weekly Non-denominational Worship Service – this is open to ALL – Protestant, Catholic, agnostic, seeking … we hope ALL feel welcome to come! Every Wednesday at 10:15 AM in the Chapel.

Sacred Space Trips: Our next Sacred Space trip will be on Thursday, March 26 (*please note revised date) to Benet Hill Monastery in Black Forest (just north of CO Springs). We will depart at 8:30 AM. Upon arrival, we will tour the monastery, and be given an informational talk on the monastery and the Benedictine way of life. We’ll join the sisters for Noon Prayers, then join them for lunch (suggested $5 cash donation for lunch). We’ll be back by 3:00 PM. Signup in the Activities Trips binder!


Laugh A Little!
Submitted by: Al C., GSE Resident

What to Give Up...

Give up complaining… focus on Gratitude
Give up pessimism… become an Optimist
Give up worry… trust Divine Providence
Give up bitterness… turn to Forgiveness
Give up hatred… return Good for evil
Give up negativity… be Positive
Give up anger… be More Patient
Give up pettiness… become Mature
Give up gloom… enjoy the Beauty all around you
Give up jealousy… pray for Trust
Give up gossiping… control your Tongue
Give up sin… turn to Virtue
Give up giving up… Hang in there!
Is Caffeine Addictive?
Continued from cover page...
Since caffeine does not activate the dopamine reward pathway, many healthcare scientists argue that it should not be considered truly addictive.

So, is my morning habit an addiction? Maybe the more important question to ask is whether you view your regular consumption of coffee, tea or energy drinks as a pleasant routine or a necessity. Is it a positive part of your life, or just part of the daily grind?

New Resident Handbook
Written by: Melissa S., GSE Staff
The Gardens at St. Elizabeth and CHI Living Communities are working on a new and improved Resident Handbook. We are getting to the final stages of completing the handbook and soon will be able to distribute to all who are interested in having an updated copy. We will be sure to update everyone when it is finalized and have copies available.

For now, we wanted to share a graphic that will be included in the Resident Handbook to show how the campus will look when the new Assisted Living Memory Care building is completed. You will see there are also 48 additional parking spots included in the future plans!
RELIGIOUS SERVICES

**Mass Schedule**
Mon.- Fri.: 9:30 AM  
Sat.: 4:00 PM  
Sun.: 10:00 AM  
LOCATION: Chapel

**Divine Mercy Rosary Schedule**
Mon. - Fri. 3:30 PM  
Sat.: 10:00 AM  
LOCATION: Chapel

**Mass for Shut-ins**  
Channel 12  
Every Sunday  
6:30 AM  
LOCATION: Chapel

**Interdenominational Service**  
Wed.: 10:30 AM  
LOCATION: Chapel

**Scripture Study**  
Every Tuesday  
10:15 AM  
LOCATION: Sun Porch

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**Chaplain Aram’s Monthly Word of Reflection and Prayer: LENT**

In my current studies to become a Benedictine oblate, I was struck by how, in the Rule of Benedict, he says that the life of the monastic is “one continual Lent.” While that may sound like drudgery to some, I am actually beginning to see it as freeing and life-giving. Lent is a time to let go of things that deaden and numb us, and a time to become more fully alive, and attuned to God who dwells within. I myself have chosen one word as my focus this Lent: health. To choose health at every turn: from what I eat, to how I sleep, to how I work, to how I am relating with my family and each of you – i.e. How am I bringing health and vitality to myself and to those around me? I came across this beautiful poem on Lent I want to share with you. The last line is the key that unlocks the poem: our deliverance and destination is not somewhere “out there”, but “in here.” As Jesus said, “The Kingdom of God is at hand.” Literally, within your reach. We just need to attend to it!

**Nothing More: A Reflection on the Beginning of Lent by Cheryl Lawrie**

Here we are at the beginning of the journey into the wilderness of being just us: mortal human ending as surely as we began. How do we ever forget this? And the wilderness stretches ahead, familiar and new, and we take the first step by dropping all we think can save us it’s all too heavy to carry, and we are tired already in our dogged attempts to avoid and accept truths too hard for knowing, we gasp for air and water and rest we wish we were at the end and we know we already are.

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Woodbury Library Programs (Corner of 33rd & Federal)  
Submitted by: Tiffany M., Librarian, Woodbury Library

**Coffee Saturdays** - 9:00 AM - In appreciation of our customers, come and enjoy a free cup of coffee, nice and hot!

**Recycling and Composting 101** - Tuesday, March 10th 6 PM - 7 PM  
Ecocycle will share ways you can help Denver increase its recycling and composting rate. Learn what to do with even the trickiest of trash items.

**NovelTea Circle** - Tuesday, March 24th 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
Enjoy a social evening tea party with other book lovers. We’ll sample teas and snacks, play games, and share our latest reads.