

Holiday De-Stress Guide

Week 1: A Caffeine-Free Holiday



The holiday season often brings an unwelcomed guest – **stress!** And it is no wonder. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands – parties, shopping, baking, and travel, to name a few.

Holidays = stress = fatigue = increased caffeine consumption

But, that extra serving of caffeine may be causing more harm than good.

Facts on Caffeine

Caffeine: natural ingredient found in coffee beans, tea leaves, cocoa beans, and guarana

Small amounts of caffeine may provide the following **benefits:** increased alertness, improved mental functioning, protection against Alzheimer's and heart disease. But, don't reach for that second cup of java just yet!

Harmful Effects of Caffeine

In small doses caffeine is a **powerful antioxidant**. **But, in excess amounts caffeine may cause many health problems, including:**

- ▶ Increased blood pressure
- ▶ Increased heart and breathing rate
- ▶ Increased body temperature
- ▶ Trouble sleeping
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Nervousness
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Reduced bone density

Did you know? Caffeine appears to **compound** the effects of stress, both **psychologically** (perceived stress level) and **physiologically** (i.e., increased blood pressure, stress hormones) – as if the stressor is actually greater (*James Lane, Ph.D., Duke University*)

Is there a safe amount?

Recommended Maximum Caffeine Intake (Health Canada)

Age(years)	Max. amount of caffeine/day
7-9	62.5 mg
10-12	85 mg
18+	400 mg



Caffeine Content of Popular Beverages

Caffeinated Beverage	Size	Caffeine (mg)
Tim Horton's Large Coffee	450 ml	253 mg
Starbucks Venti Coffee	592 ml	400 mg
Full Throttle Energy Drink	472 ml	144 mg
Second Cup Large Tea	575 ml	210 mg



Take a Caffeine Holiday

Enjoy the benefits of a caffeine holiday, **pick a week and go for it!**

Simple tips to help you get started:

- Drink water
- Try de-caffeinated hot herbal tea
- Cut down gradually



Healthy ways to boost your energy

Get ready to learn more about the following topics throughout this holiday series.

Increase your magnesium intake: Magnesium is needed for more than 300 biochemical reactions in your body, including breaking down glucose into energy. When levels are low, energy can drop. Try the salmon recipe this holiday to get your magnesium dose.

Walk around the block: Increasing physical activity (particularly walking) increases energy. Gather your family and walk around the block to enjoy the festive decorations.

Do not skip breakfast – or any other meal: A well-rounded breakfast will supply your body with a jolt of fuel setting the tone for the day. Also, skipping any meal will lead to fatigue by day's end.

Drink more water and less alcohol: Slight dehydration can leave you feeling tired and lethargic. The solution is simple: a tall, cool glass of water. Also, try cutting out alcohol during the evening hours.

Reduce stress: Stress is the result of anxiety, and anxiety uses up a lot of energy. Combat stress by scheduling relaxation into your day. Physical activity and meditation are great ways to de-stress and boost your energy. This holiday, reconnect with old friends by taking a yoga break.

Get a good night's sleep: It may be a challenge to get a good night's sleep during the busy holiday season. But, a good night's rest is bound to result in more energy the next day. Promote rest by drinking a cup of hot chamomile tea.

Resources: Health Canada, www.webmd.com