



EATING 101 RU DINING HEALTHY?



A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM
A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

Sleep Hygiene and Caffeine

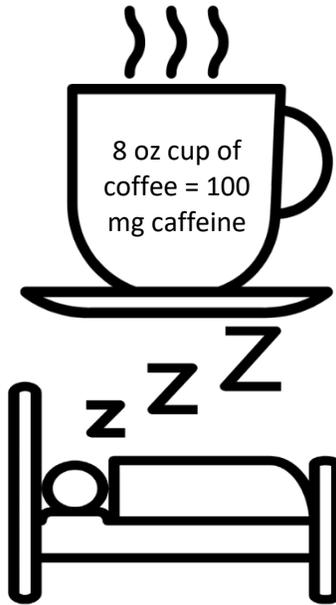
It is 4pm and you find yourself suffering from the dreaded “afternoon slump”. Do you A) grab a coffee or energy drink to power through, B) go outside for a brisk walk, or C) take a power nap? If you chose A, you are not alone. In fact, a study revealed 92% of college students consume caffeine in some form. However, caffeine can affect one of the most essential processes for good health, our sleep. While different people have varying tolerance levels, the time of day and the amount of caffeine consumed can either have a positive or negative effect on your sleep and overall health.

How Does Caffeine Affect Sleep?

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends not consuming caffeine within six hours of bedtime because the half-life of caffeine is between four to six hours. For example, if you consume 300mg of caffeine, you will still have 150mg left in your body after five hours.

Caffeine disrupts the quality of your sleep by blocking the effects of the hormone *adenosine*, which is responsible for deep sleep.

Levels of *melatonin*, another hormone that helps with the onset of sleep, can drop in the presence of caffeine.



Sleeping to Succeed

Research suggests that seven to nine hours of sleep per night is recommended for the college-aged population.

Sleep plays a critical role in helping our bodies and minds recover from the demands of the day.

Irregular sleep schedules can negatively impact learning, memory, and overall performance.

Sufficient sleep has been linked to better academic performance and higher GPAs.

How to Cope with an Afternoon Slump Without Using Caffeine

-  Tackle the midday slump with an energy boosting snack that includes fiber, protein, and healthy fats. Snack ideas include a Greek yogurt parfait, trail mix, or assorted vegetables, such as carrots and broccoli, with hummus
-  Take a moment to hydrate with water; studies show mild dehydration can cause sleepiness
-  Step outside and expose yourself to natural light on a brisk walk as natural light can slow the production of melatonin
-  Tried all these and still tired? Give your mind and body a break by taking a 20-minute power nap to restore your energy

Catch some Zzz's to Brew-ten Your Day!

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References: *Caffeine* Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/caffeine/> Accessed on: April 5th 2022 *Intake of caffeine from all sources and reasons for use by college students* Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29680166/> Accessed on: April 5th 2022. *7 Ways to Wake Up Without Coffee* Available at: <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/caffeine-free-strategies-to-stay-energized> Accessed on April 5th 2022 *Causes and consequences of sleepiness among college students* Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4075951/> Accessed on April 5th 2022