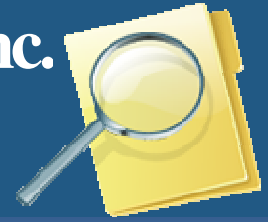


# Newsletter issued by Forensic Nursing, Inc. At Your Service



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*"Like everyone else who makes the mistake of getting older, I begin each day with coffee and obituaries."*

*--Bill Cosby*

## CAFFEINE > The Good, the Bad, and the Maybe > How Caffeine Works

Adenosine helps prepare the body for sleep by curbing the chatter between nerve cells and by widening blood vessels to increase the flow of oxygen.

Receptors on the surface of brain cells can't tell the difference between adenosine and caffeine. So when you consume caffeine, it attaches itself to the receptors and adenosine is shut out.

Without adenosine to make you sleepy, your brain activity perks up and you're more alert. By blocking adenosine, caffeine also constricts your blood vessels, which makes your headache disappear.

### What Caffeine **MAY** Be Good For:

"Lower risk of developing Parkinson's disease" - researcher Dr. Alberto Ascherio, Harvard School of Public Health-Boston. Caffeine may protect the chemical messenger dopamine, the brain messenger that is decreased with Parkinsons. Caffeine also seems to protect human brain cells.....however, not for everyone. It is not a panacea.

>"Caffeine helps maintain attention but memory or complex reasoning doesn't improve" - Dr. Harris Lieberman, U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine-Natick, Mass. Dr. Lieberman reported that in the sleep deprived, however, caffeine has a more striking impact. It does improve alertness, ability to perform complex tasks is better as is the memory. Why? People who are falling asleep on the job can't do anything. If you give them something that wakes them up they do better. That's why the military is studying caffeine.  
>Caffeine affects mood. After consuming

20-200 mg. of caffeine, people report increased well-being, happiness, energy, alertness, and sociability.

>Caffeine helps the body burn fat instead of carbohydrate, and blunts the perception of pain. Both can boost endurance. Research shows that caffeine can also improve anaerobic performance such as weight lifting and sprinting short distances.

### What Caffeine **MAY NOT** Be Good For:

>Sleep >Fertility > Too much caffeine can increase risk of miscarriage >There is a question of too much caffeine causing birth defects....but information isn't conclusive.

>Counteracting alcohol. People who are both inebriated and caffeinated will *think* they're okay, but their reaction time and judgment will still be impaired. Caffeine is more likely to reverse the subjective effects of alcohol than the performance effects. There is less risk for accident from consuming just alcohol than both.  
> Migraines. Caffeine can help relieve headache pain but daily exposure appears to lower the threshold for provoking migraines in genetically susceptible people. (Dr. Robert Shapiro, University of VT)

### What You **MAY NOT** Need to Worry About:

Heart Disease; Cancer; Diabetes; High Blood Pressure; Osteoporosis; Dehydration; PMS; Weight Loss; Growth. Caffeine *IS NOT* a diuretic.  
**Like always, consult your doctor if you are not sure whether CAFFEINE is good for your health.**

----Nutrition Action Health Letter, March 2008. Center for Science in the Public Interest.

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