

Benefits of switching to decaffeinated Drinks

Information for Patients, Residents and Families

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire NHS services are increasingly adopting a “decaffeinated by default” approach, with several hospitals and Care Homes now routinely offering decaffeinated tea and coffee as the standard option across wards and residential settings.

This shift reflects growing evidence that reducing caffeine intake can improve hydration, support continence, and lower the risk of toileting related falls, aligning local practice with national pilots and clinical guidance.



What is decaffeinated tea or coffee?

Caffeine is a natural chemical with stimulant effects, which means it increases activity in your brain and nervous system. It is found in tea, coffee, caffeinated fizzy drinks as well as a large number of other products.

Decaf is short for decaffeinated. Decaffeinated tea, coffee or fizzy drinks is simply where the caffeine has been removed from the drink. It may still contain very low levels depending on how it was produced.

Why are decaf drinks better for my bladder health?

Having an overactive bladder means that you may experience urgency, frequent need to go, and waking during the night to pass urine. There are certain drinks that will make this worse including caffeine, found in tea, coffee and fizzy drinks, which is a stimulant that can irritate the bladder. Cutting out the caffeine and switching to decaffeinated drinks will improve your bladder health and reduce these urinary symptoms. By reducing that sudden urge to pass urine, you can also help reduce your risk of having a fall which can often happen when rushing to reach the toilet in time.

Are there other benefits of switching to decaffeinated drinks?



Other benefits of switching to decaffeinated tea/ coffee include:

- improved sleep
- reduce noticeable/ irregular heartbeats (palpitations)
- helps prevent dehydration and headaches
- reduces indigestion
- reduces risk of a condition that weakens bones (osteoporosis), as caffeine prevents absorption of calcium.

Caffeine Withdrawal



If you normally drink a lot of caffeinated tea, coffee, and caffeinated fizzy drinks you may have some withdrawal headaches. These may develop after about 18 hours. If this occurs drink plenty of plain water. Headaches and low energy levels may last for a couple of days, but the benefits will be worth it.

Caffeinated tea and coffee are available if you prefer. Please ask for this. Or, if you want to continue with the switch to decaffeinated tea or coffee, we advise that you reduce your intake by half a cup a day, over a 7-day period, building up to a level where you are drinking less than 5 caffeinated drinks a week.

Once you have reached this level of consumption it will be easier to take the decision to remove caffeine from your diet altogether.



For more information, please visit:

www.notts.icb.nhs.uk/care-home-staff-information

or scan the QR code below – make sure you look for the ‘Decaffeinated by Default’ tile.