

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS NORTH FLORIDA CHAPTER

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

Looking to Santa for Good Health



When Santa comes down your chimney this month, will he be buzzed on caffeine from pulling an all-nighter? If so, a study published online on November 8 of this year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests that he could be at an increased level of risk for heart disease. The study was performed by the Mayo Clinic and was conducted with the help of twenty-five healthy participants with an average age of 29 years old. The participants randomly drank either a 16-ounce energy drink or a placebo drink on two separate days, with at most two weeks between those days. The placebo was similar in color, texture, and taste to the energy drink, but did not contain caffeine or other stimulants.

The results of this study indicated that the average blood pressure increased by

6 percent after consumption of the energy drink and 1 percent after consumption of the placebo. According to information presented on the CDC's website, in the year 2013, more than 360,000 American deaths included high blood pressure as a primary or contributing cause. Further, according to the CDC, high blood pressure (above 140 mmHg systolic and above 90 mmHG diastolic) increases your risk for various dangerous health conditions that include heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

The results of the Mayo Clinic study also indicated that levels of norepinephrine, a stress hormone chemical, increased nearly 74 percent in participants after they consumed the energy drink, compared with a 31 percent increase after drinking the placebo. Such an increase, it is postulated, could make even healthy individuals susceptible to a heightened risk of heart disease.

So just how much caffeine is in present-day energy drinks? To find out, *Consumer Reports* magazine ran an analysis on 27 energy drinks sold in the United States; the results indicate that there is anywhere from 1.5 milligrams of caffeine per ounce of beverage to 113 mg/oz. For comparison, an

average cup of coffee contains 14 mg/oz. Interestingly, *Consumer Reports* stated that 31 percent of the drink samples tested that actually listed their caffeine content had more than 20 percent above their labeled amount. Conversely, 6 percent of the drink samples tested had 70 percent below the labeled amount. For the other drinks that list caffeine levels, the actual numbers were within 20 percent of claimed. So for the 11 drinks that did not list the caffeine amount, why didn't they? First, some drink formulas are proprietary. Second, according to the Monster Beverage Corporation, "because there is no legal or commercial business requirement to do so, and also because our products are completely safe, and the actual numbers are not meaningful to most consumers."

So now that you have an understanding of the relationship between caffeine consumption and health, please allow me to add a level of confusion. According to a large U.S. study published online in November of this year in *Circulation*, coffee consumption, you know, the beverage that has caffeine in it, may extend your lifespan. According to Dr. Frank Hu, a professor of nutrition and

epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, many people think of coffee-drinking as a bad habit that they need to break. But, Dr. Hu said, many studies have linked moderate coffee intake to a lower level of risk of developing various ailments such as heart disease, diabetes, liver cancer, as well as neurological diseases such as Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's.

Dr. Hu's comments are backed up by a study conducted by his team, and funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, that found that coffee drinkers were not only less likely to develop certain diseases, they also tended to live longer lives. Both regular coffee and decaf were linked to longer survival, the study found. None of that proves coffee, itself, extends people's lives or directly protects against certain diseases, Dr. Hu said. Other factors might explain the connection. But, Dr. Hu added, his team did account for many of those factors and the coffee benefit remained.

The study's findings are based on more than 200,000 U.S. doctors, nurses and other health professionals who were surveyed repeatedly over almost three decades. It turned out that people who drank one to five cups of coffee at the outset had lower odds of dying during the study period when other lifestyle habits and certain health problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, were taken into account. The relationship

grew stronger when the researchers looked only at nonsmokers: Those in this group who drank three to five cups of coffee a day were 15 percent less likely to die during the study period, compared with adults who didn't drink coffee. Lower risks were even seen among the heaviest coffee drinkers (more than five cups a day), who had a 12 percent lower death risk than nondrinkers.

In summary, perhaps the best way to determine what actually does and does not facilitate a long and healthy life is to look to Jolly Old St. Nicholas himself. After all, he is estimated to be 1,740 years old.

Bob Dooley

Article Sources and Hyperlinks of Interest

https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_155736.html

<http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/factsheet.html>

<http://www.math.utah.edu/~yplee/fun/caffeeine.html>

<http://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-energy-blood-pressure-norepinephrine.html>

Santa Image -

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Claus

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A Holiday Letter from the Local Chapter President

As this calendar year draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. I would also like to remind everyone, although I think the audience that receives this newsletter already knows it, that this is the time of year when senseless accidents happen from distractions. Our minds just aren't on the tasks at hand. Let's remember to stay alert and continue to watch out for others so they too can enjoy the holiday season.

Reflecting back on the past four months I just have to say it's been a great ride. The summer social took place at the Jacksonville Suns game which was a great game and the lesson learned was not to schedule a social event on a holiday weekend. Next year I will plan it much sooner and get a better weekend. Our monthly meetings have had some really great speakers on some interesting topics, and the food, all I can say is wow it was good. Keep up the great work. Over the next few months we have a great agenda set up. I would like to encourage those who have not been able to make it, to try and find some time and join us. It's a great networking opportunity along with good educational topics. To some of the new faces that have shown up, it's great to see you; and for the members that frequently show up, I would like to thank you for the support.

Have a great holiday.

Respectfully,

Dan Hemsall

North Florida Chapter
President