



FROM THE ISAO SAFETY COMMITTEE:

OVER-CAFFEINATION IN WINTER



Caffeine is a popular stimulant and provides a quick warm up, especially during winter when shorter days and colder weather leave many reaching for coffee or energy drinks. However, it is important to understand: the hazards of caffeine, strategies to control intake, and healthier alternatives to maintain energy and warmth during the winter months.

Describe the Hazard

- **Over-dependence on Caffeine:** Regular consumption can lead to dependency, requiring higher doses for the same effect.
- **Adverse Health Effects:** High caffeine intake may cause insomnia, anxiety, increased heart rate, and digestive issues.
- **Dehydration Risk:** Caffeine is a diuretic, potentially increasing water loss during winter when hydration is already overlooked.
- **Interference with Sleep Cycles:** Winter's reduced daylight can disrupt circadian rhythms; excess caffeine worsens this, leading to poor sleep quality.
- **Energy Crashes:** The temporary boost from caffeine often results in energy dips, leading to a cycle of overconsumption.

Discuss Control Measures

- Health Canada recommends no more than 400 mg of caffeine per day (approximately 32 oz of coffee, or 80 oz black tea, or 2 energy drinks a day.)
- Avoid consuming caffeine in the late afternoon or evening to prevent sleep disruption.
- Drink water throughout the day to counteract caffeine's dehydrating effects.

- Gradually reduce caffeine intake by mixing caffeinated beverages with decaf alternatives.
- Be mindful of hidden caffeine in teas, sodas, and chocolate.
- Light physical activities, like stretching or walking, naturally increase energy and improve mood in colder months.

Try alternative warm drinks:

- Herbal teas like: peppermint, chamomile, or ginger teas are caffeine-free and warming, perfect for winter.
- Caffeine-free coffee-like substitutes including chicory root coffee or roasted dandelion tea mimic coffee's flavor without the stimulant.
- Golden Milk is a blend of turmeric, ginger, and warm milk, offers anti-inflammatory benefits and boosts energy.
- Smoothies: Winter-friendly options like banana, oat, and almond milk smoothies provide natural energy without caffeine.

Demonstrate Knowledge

- Discuss with your team some of your favourite coffee substitutes.
- Try substituting one coffee per day with an alternative.
- Monitor your daily caffeine and water intake.
- Incorporate stretching and walking into your day to help improve your energy level.

By understanding the hazards of caffeine, implementing control measures, and exploring healthier alternatives, you can maintain energy levels without over-relying on stimulants this winter.

Date: _____

Location: _____

Presenter: _____

MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY
(Each participant is to sign below)