

Information for patients and carers

**The benefits of switching to
decaffeinated tea and coffee**

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

What is decaf tea/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 and coffee as well as many other products.

Decaf is short for decaffeinated. In decaffeinated tea or coffee, the caffeine has been removed from the coffee beans or tea leaves. The tea or coffee may still contain very low levels depending on how it was produced.

Why are decaf drinks better for bladder health?

Having an overactive bladder means that you may experience an urgency or frequent need to go and waking during the night to pass urine. There are certain drinks that will make this worse including caffeine, which is found in tea and coffee, which is a stimulant that can irritate the bladder.

Cutting out the caffeine and switching to decaffeinated tea and coffee 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 want to switch to decaffeinated tea or coffee, we suggest 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.

If you normally drink a lot of caffeinated tea and coffee, you may have some withdrawal headaches. These typically develop after 18 hours. If these occur 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 still available in hospital if you prefer.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware

Adapted with permission from University Hospital of Leicester

Follow us on social media @lancshospitals

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:

patientexperienceandinvolve@LTHTR.nhs.uk

Department: Urology

Division: Surgery

Production date: February 2025

Review date: February 2028

JR 1251 v1