

Spring 2008 ENN

Fill Up Your Reusable Mug—With Fewer Calories!

It's winter, and that means classes are starting up again, and warm jackets and hot drinks are the accessories of choice. By now you have already begun to use your university provided refillable mug for that early morning coffee fix, or that late afternoon study break. The Green Mountain coffee at the Corner Café is delicious, and you are excited to be helping the university reduce paper waste by bringing your own mug, but now you wonder—"How many calories am I drinking?"

According to the Mayo Clinic, if you drink your coffee black, you are drinking in approximately 2 calories for every 8 ounce cup (the same goes for tea). However, when you add sugar, milk, or creamer to your caffeinated beverage, the calorie count starts to climb. For every tablespoon of sugar you use, you add 48 calories. For every tablespoon of whole milk you add, you are increasing the calories by 9, and the fat content by half a gram (skim milk is only 5 calories with no fat). This may not seem like much, but the average person uses approximately 3 tablespoons of sugar in a large coffee (144 calories), and anywhere between 5 and 10 tablespoons of milk (45 to 90 calories, and 2.5 to 5 grams of fat!) In just one tablespoon of cream there are 6 grams of fat, and 52 calories.

Of course, there are worse things out there than a 150-250 calorie cup of coffee, especially when you drink in moderation. However, the average American drinks 1 to 3 cups of coffee a day, and the typical college student, according to a Loyola University study, is drinking well above that average.

If you drank 3 cups of coffee with 3 tablespoons of sugar and 5 tablespoons of whole milk each, you would be drinking 573 calories worth of coffee a day. That is more calories than a Wendy's® Jr. Hamburger, a small French fries, and a diet Coke® combined (560 calories)!

Remember when you go fill up your mug this semester, use coffee flavoring in moderation, and count your calories too!

For More Information:

Loyola Study: <http://clearinghouse.missouriwestern.edu/manuscripts/204.asp>

Mayo Clinic: <http://mayoclinic.com/health/calories/NU00185>

Wendy's® Nutrition: <http://www.wendys.com/food/Nutrition.jsp>

Chartwells Nutrition Journal: <http://dineoncampus.com/albany/index.cfm?cmd=NutritionJournal>