



*Nothing can
make me
happier than
hot, black coffee
with two sugars.*

Coffee

C. Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

I am a coffee fanatic. Once you go to proper coffee, you can't go back. You cannot go back.

— Hugh Laurie

Radiologists work in the dark. I am not sure I need to say anything more about our love for coffee after that statement. We work in the dark. We need caffeine to stay alert, and I have to tell you, energy drinks with caffeine don't do it for me. Nothing can make me happier than hot, black coffee with two sugars. Well, okay. One other caffeine product. More on that.

As radiologists, we discuss coffee a lot. If you didn't know better, you'd think we were coffee brokers and merchants. But, we're not paid that well and that is the critical distinction. Between cases, we are about as likely to discuss coffee as restaurants (and we talk about the coffee we had at those restaurants, which was why we're discussing the restaurants). I'm surrounded by coffee shops here in NYC: "The city that never sleeps"? I know why. We're all way over-caffeinated. You thought it was because of the number of things to do, right? I think there are many schools of thought as to what is a good coffee. Maybe you're the cappuccino type, maybe a latte drinker, maybe coffee with

some flavor, or maybe you like (horrors!) decaf. I've been drinking coffee pretty religiously since medical school. Before medical school, the idea of drinking a beverage to sharpen the mind or wake up in the morning was not present. I was led to the dark side by morning anatomy lab. Radiology just kicked the whole thing into high gear.

The coffee stand, coffee cart, or coffee shop of your choice is likely in possession of the following elements: coffee in several different varieties, pastries, flavor syrups, teas (why, oh Lord, why?), and, my personal favorite—chocolate-covered roasted espresso beans. Have you had these? I don't think these should be sold over the counter. I think you should have a prescription, and have it signed off by your cardiologist. It's all your sugar requirements, chocolate, and a few hundred grams of caffeine. They are jet fuel. Think of them as fuel rods for your nuclear reactor. A few of those and I feel like my eyelids were cemented in the full open position. My pupils are at F2. I talk like Alvin. I saw some one time that were decaf. Ha! What's the point in that? Make them sugar free, and then you have a completely worthless product.

Next time you're in line for java, don't just eye that little cellophane bag of coffee napalm. Go ahead. Mahalo.

Dr. Phillips is a Professor of Radiology, Director of Head and Neck Imaging, at Weill Cornell Medical College, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, New York, NY. He is a member of the Applied Radiology Editorial Advisory Board.