

Bigger, fattening beverages will turn into more groans on the bathroom scale

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When you're ordering the new Starbucks "trenta" you're not only getting a massive drink (31 ounces) but also a massive amount of calories (up to 600), with the potential to pack on more than 60 extra pounds in one year.

"An extra 200 [calories](#) per day will lead to a weight gain of about 2 pounds per month, or 21 pounds per year, so an extra 600 calories could mean an increase in weight of upwards of 63 pounds in a year," said Jessica Bartfield, MD, an internal medicine and medical weight-loss specialist at Gottlieb Memorial Hospital, part of the Loyola University Health System.

A normal cup of coffee is considered to be 6 to 8 ounces, and studies have suggested that 1 to 2 cups of caffeinated coffee daily can have health benefits. "The new 'trenta' will offer 4 to 5 cups of coffee in one serving, and unfortunately the additional caffeine will not 'burn off' the excess calories," Dr. Bartfield said.

"People need to recognize that these drinks are not necessarily innocent ways to quench our thirst, boost our energy or satisfy a sweet tooth," she said. "Drinks are rather sneaky sources, usually, of empty calories – nutritionally deplete."

Gottlieb offers a medically supervised weight-loss program involving physicians, nutritionists, exercise physiologists and behavioralists to establish positive lifestyle habits that lead to achieving a healthy weight.

“Increasing sizes of food or beverages potentially distorts our perception of portion size and makes it difficult to respond to our body’s natural cues of being hungry or thirsty or full,” said Courtney Burtscher, clinical psychologist who runs the monthly behavior management group as part of Loyola’s weight-loss program. People will sometimes use external cues to decide when to eat and when to stop. Cues can include the following: when others are eating, when the TV show they are watching goes to commercial or is over and when their portion is gone.”

According to Dr. Burtscher, factors that contribute to how much people eat may include:

generational - “My parents taught me to clean my plate and not waste food.”

relational - “Feelings will be hurt if I don’t finish what they made/gave me.”

economical - “This is such a good deal – more bang for my buck.”

convenience - “I’m in a rush and need it now.”

emotional - “Extreme moods may increase the chances for emotional eating.”

“Massive amounts of food and drink should not be promoted to American consumers when the majority of our population is overweight or obese,” Dr. Bartfield said.

Both doctors believe that taking personal responsibility for our health is important.

“Knowing our own body and our own nutritional needs is an important

part of eating healthily and taking care of ourselves,” Dr. Burtcher said. “Self awareness decreases the possibility of using external cues such as price, size or others’ behaviors, and can lead to behavior change and successful eating habits.”

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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