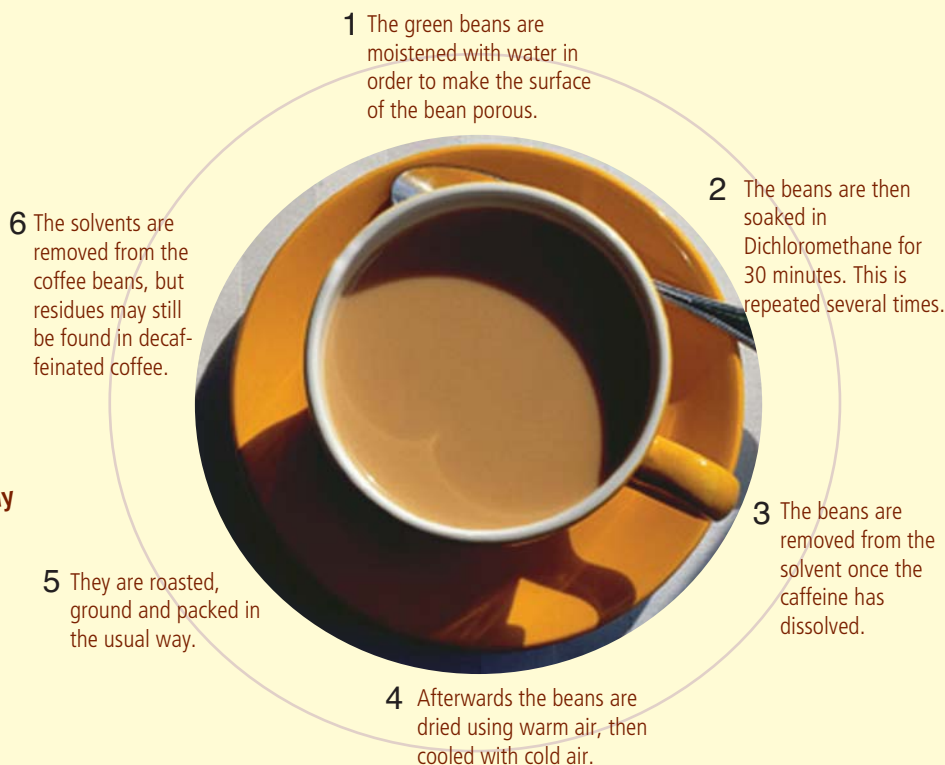


A sip of sickness ?

A steaming hot cup of coffee can rejuvenate you after a long, tiring day... but, if you want to avoid the addictive Caffeine, and opt for the Decaffeinated variety, you may be opting for trouble!

This is the Decaffeinating Process using Dichloromethane (DCM):

To make coffee Caffeine-free, a supplement is derived from the beans using solvents. But, some solvents may have adverse effects. For example, Dichloromethane, a well-known solvent used for decaffeinating coffee, may cause cancer, say scientists...



Dichloromethane evaporates when exposed to air and dissolves when mixed with water. It evaporates from water too.

It degrades by reacting in the air with photochemically produced products. The expected lifetime in the air is 130 days.

Workers in the industries that use or produce dichloromethane get directly exposed. Consumers can be exposed while using products that contain dichloromethane.

Effects:

- It may irritate the lungs that can cause a build up of fluid (pulmonary oedema).
- Lower doses may cause headaches, fatigue, and behaviour similar to being drunk.
- Dichloromethane exposure may cause the heart to beat irregularly or stop. Long term exposures at high levels may also damage the liver and brain.
- In animals, as well as humans, dichloromethane is metabolised into carbon monoxide, which results in depriving the body of oxygen.