Does rinsing or resteeping tea remove the caffeine?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

No. Neither trick does what people hope.

The internet version goes: steep your tea for 30 seconds, throw that water away, and the rest of the caffeine is gone. It is not. Caffeine comes out of tea leaves steadily over several minutes, not all at once in the first half-minute, so a quick rinse removes only a small part of it, while taking with it a lot of the flavour and aroma you were brewing for.

The second claim (that a second infusion has half the caffeine) is also unreliable. Research that brewed the same tea repeatedly under controlled conditions found that the caffeine in each infusion does not fall in a neat staircase, and in some conditions the second infusion was the highest of the set. National Taiwan University research record

How much comes out when depends on water temperature, leaf size, dose and time, not on which pour it is.

What actually lowers caffeine in your cup

What you do	Effect
Choose a naturally caffeine-free infusion	None at all: rooibos, peppermint, chamomile, fruit
Buy decaffeinated tea	Most of the caffeine removed commercially, a little remains
Use less leaf	Proportionally less caffeine
Use cooler water, shorter time	Somewhat less extracted
Rinse and discard	Small reduction, big flavour loss
Drink a second infusion	Unpredictable

Decaf is the reliable route if you want tea flavour, but it is not caffeine-free: decaffeination removes most of the caffeine, not all of it. FDA on decaffeinated drinks See decaf vs caffeine free.

How much caffeine are we talking about?

The NHS puts an average mug of tea, black or green, at about **75mg** of caffeine, against 100mg for a mug of instant coffee. In pregnancy the advice is to stay under 200mg a day in total. NHS caffeine guidance

For most people, the practical lever is how many mugs and when, not how you brew each one.

So should I bother resteeping?

Yes, for flavour, not for caffeine. Good loose leaf, especially oolong and green tea, gives two, three or more infusions, each one slightly different. That is the pleasure of it. Our resteeping guide covers how to make the

most of each infusion.

Just do not count on the later cups being "the decaf ones".

Common questions

Where did the rinse myth come from?
Probably from the fact that caffeine is highly water-soluble, which is true, plus a misreading of how quickly that happens in a cup.

Does gongfu brewing lower caffeine?
No. Short infusions with a lot of leaf can deliver more caffeine per cup, not less, though each small cup is a small volume.

Is green tea lower in caffeine than black?
Not reliably. It depends on the leaf and how you brew it; the NHS gives the same figure for both.

What if I need to avoid caffeine entirely?
Choose a herbal infusion with no tea leaves in it, and read the ingredients on blends.

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