

Too much coffee is a real thing. Learned that the hard way.



I've been waiting years to get my breathing issues taken seriously. And finally looked like, maybe, I was getting somewhere. After cancellations and rescheduling (Kaiser's doing, not mine) I finally got an appointment at Kaiser Santa Clara's pulmonology department.

There were no notes about doing anything to prepare, and I went into it not even knowing what was going to be done/tested for. Life has been so hectic lately that I also haven't been thinking very clearly. So unclearly that I took way too many opportunities for caffeine that morning; when I look back at it, it might have been the equivalent of 5 cups. I just wasn't giving any thought to it (obviously!), and the cold weather wasn't helping me resist.

I thought I was in a good place, with the recent blood pressure meds doing a really great job. But, they hadn't been put to the caffeine test. And certainly not 5 cups of coffee worth! None of that occurred to me until they sat me down to take my blood pressure. After all, last time I had it checked, when I went to the ER a few weeks ago to make sure I hadn't busted my thumb, it was 120/80 or so. Yeah well, that was in the evening and any caffeine would have long worn off by then (generally I stay away from caffeine after 2pm, to make sure it won't interfere with sleep).

166/somthing-or-other. Oh crap. The tech takes it again, and it's a LITTLE lower, but not much. She calls the doc, asking if he wants to cancel the test because the bp is so high, and he says no, they'll see how it goes.

Did a lot of the usual breathing-into-a-tube thing, answered a whole lot of questions about why somebody who seemed to be in decent shape and wasn't carrying around an oxygen bottle would be there, even had a fair amount of implied guilt and a talking-to about how I'm getting older and I should expect I can't keep up with younger versions of myself. I protested that I can keep up with fit people my own age, to no avail.

Eventually I got onto the exercise bike that increases resistance so they can check how your heart and lungs are doing under load, with 12 different electrodes taped to your chest. And not too far into that the doc says ok, that's enough, I'm pulling the plug because your blood pressure's too high.

Where do I go from here. Somehow I have to convince someone who doesn't think I should be there, that I need another shot at it, sans caffeine.

But overall there's a really bad taste in my mouth that I got lectured for not being their typical patient who's terribly out of shape, overweight, and just wants magic pills to feel better.