

# Caffeine: What You Need to Know

**Caffeine is a substance that is found naturally in certain foods, such as coffee, tea and chocolate. It is also added to certain foods and medicine. In this handout, you will learn how caffeine affects your body. You will also learn how much caffeine is in certain foods and drinks.**

## WHAT DOES CAFFEINE DO?

- Acts as a **stimulant**, which keeps you awake and alert
- Acts as a **diuretic** (a substance that helps your body get rid of extra salt and water by urinating more)
- Increases how much acid your stomach releases, which can sometimes lead to heartburn or an upset stomach
- May affect how well your body absorbs calcium from food
- Raises blood pressure

## WHAT IS A SAFE AMOUNT OF CAFFEINE?

- **Adults age 18 and older:** 300-400 milligrams (mg) a day. That is about 4 cups of coffee, 10 cans of soda or two energy shot drinks a day.
- **Teens age 18 and under:** 100 mg a day. This is about one cup of coffee or 2 cans of soda a day.

### ***A note about energy drinks...***

Energy drinks have a lot of caffeine added to them. They can be dangerous. Companies claim they can increase alertness and mental and physical performance. There is very little research showing that energy drinks might do this for a short period of time.

Energy drinks also have lots of extra sugar. They can contribute to weight gain and diabetes.

## WHAT ARE SIDE EFFECTS OF CAFFEINE?

- Poor sleep or insomnia (sleeplessness)
- Restlessness or shakiness
- Headaches or dizziness
- Rapid or abnormal (unusual) heart beat
- Dehydration
- Anxiety
- Dependency (when you have to drink more and more caffeine to feel the same effects)

**It is best to cut back on caffeine slowly.** If you stop suddenly or too quickly, you might feel unwell. You might also experience symptoms of caffeine withdrawal.

Symptoms of caffeine withdrawal include fatigue, headaches and depressed mood.

### ***How caffeine affects your sleep...***

You can feel the effects of caffeine within one hour of drinking a caffeinated drink. You can continue to feel the effects for 4-6 hours.






To help you sleep better, try the following:

- Stop drinking caffeinated drinks 4-6 hours before bed.
- Try drinking half caffeinated and half decaffeinated coffee or tea.
- Lessen how much caffeine you have slowly. Try cutting down one serving per day.




## AMOUNT OF CAFFEINE IN YOUR FAVORITE DRINKS

1  = 10 milligrams (mg) of caffeine


### Coffee

- Brewed coffee (8 ounces [0z.], 95-310 mg)
  - Low: Dunkin Donuts® (medium, 210 mg)  

  - High: Starbucks® (grande, 310 mg)  

- Brewed, decaf (8 oz., 5 mg)  

- Espresso (1 oz., 50 mg)  

- Latte or mocha (8 oz., 60mg)  





### Tea

- Brewed, black (8 oz., 30 mg)  

- Brewed, green (8 oz., 20 mg)  

- Bottled or ready-to-drink (8 oz.)
  - Honest Tea® Organic Lemon (17 oz., 90 mg)  


### Soda

- Citrus (8 oz., 0 mg)
- Cola (8 oz., 30 mg)  


### Energy drinks

- Energy drink (8 oz.)
  - Red Bull® (8 oz., 80 mg)  

  - Monster® (16 oz., 160 mg)  

- Energy shot (1 oz., 50 mg)  


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