# Learning About Caffeine

## What is Caffeine?

Caffeine is a natural element found in the leaves and seeds of coffee and cocoa beans, kola nuts, and tea leaves. People often drink coffee, tea, or energy drinks that contain caffeine for caffeine's stimulating effect on the body. After you dink or eat a food that contains caffeine, you may feel more alert and able to concentrate better. Many people drink beverages with caffeine to wake up in the morning or to stay alert when they drive.

Most coffee drinkers drink about two cups a day. Depending on the size of the cups and what process was used to make the coffee, their intake of caffeine is between 200 to 280 mg a day. It's a good idea for adults to consume no more than 400mg caffeine a day. Its best for pregnant woman to avoid or limit caffeine. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children and teens not use energy drinks.

## How much caffeine is in beverages and food?

Caffeine is found in many types of drinks and in chocolate. Some medicines for pain relief and weight loss also contain caffeine.

Average amount of caffeine in drinks, per serving

- Black or green tea, 16oz = 60-100mg
- Coffee, brewed drip, 6oz = 103mg
- Coffee, brewed percolator, 6oz = 75mg
- Energy drinks, 8oz = 75mg
- Espresso, 1oz = 40mg
- Regular or diet colas, 12oz = 35-50mg

Average amount of caffeine in chocolate, per serving

- Chocolate, 1oz = 8-20mg
- Chocolate milk, 8oz = 8mg
- Hot chocolate, 6oz = 4mg

## How does caffeine affect your health?

People react to caffeine in different ways. In general, caffeine stays in your body for 4 to 6 hours. Some people are more sensitive to it than others. For example, some people drink coffee all day long and still get a good night's rest. Others feel the effects of caffeine longer. This can lead to sleepless or restless nights.

After ingesting caffeine, people who are sensitive to it may:

- Have a faster heartbeat.
- Get a headache or an upset stomach.
- Feel more nervous or shaky.
- Feel dizzy.

If you have bad reactions to caffeine, you might think about cutting back on how much you get in your beverages and food.

## How do you cut back on caffeine?

If you decide to lower the amount of caffeine in your diet, think about doing it slowly. If you quit caffeine suddenly, you may have symptoms of depression, headaches, and muscle aches. Feeling angry or irritable is another common reaction.

You might try:

- Cutting back by one cup of a caffeinated drink a day until you reach the level you want.
- Mixing decaffeinated and regular coffee.
- Brewing your tea a shorter length of time.