



Caffeine

Caffeine is a substance found mainly in coffee, tea, and kola nuts. It acts as a stimulant and diuretic, increasing urine production. It blocks sleep-inducing chemicals in the brain, keeping the body more alert, and increases the production of adrenaline. Caffeine boosts the effects of neurotransmitters, dopamine and serotonin, which improves mood. It also boosts levels of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that improves short-term memory.

The Facts

- 9 out of 10 Americans consume some type of caffeine regularly, making it the most popular behavior-altering drug.
- 450 million cups of coffee are consumed in the US everyday.
- Only takes about 10 minutes for caffeine to kick in and reaches its maximum effect in about 45min.

Recommended Amount

Recommended amount is 200-300 mg a day
(Equivalent to 2-3 cups of 8 ounces of coffee)

Moderate Intake (200-300mg)

- Increased alertness
- Increased heart rate
- Increased body temperature
- Increased acid in digestive system

High Intake (500-800mg)

- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Restlessness/nervousness
- Upset stomach
- Increased urination

Spilling the Beans on Caffeine

Weight Loss. The Food and Drug Administration removed caffeine from over-the-counter diet aids in 1991 because research showed it did not have long term effects on weight.

Calories Burned. Caffeine is thought to stimulate thermogenesis — one way your body generates heat and energy from digesting food. Caffeine may increase your body's ability to burn calories. However, caffeine's role in thermogenesis probably isn't enough to result in significant weight loss.

Appetite Suppressant. Caffeine may act as an appetite suppressant. However, while studies have shown that some people eat less after consuming caffeine, this effect is brief and does not lead to significant weight loss.

Athletic Performance. A recent study found that caffeine may actually decrease blood flow to the heart during exercise which can hamper performance. Research has shown that caffeine has been proven to only enhance athletic performance of well trained athletes in a lab.

Pregnancy. A few studies have shown that there may be an increase in miscarriages among women who consume more than 200 mg a day. Other outcomes include pre-term labor and low-birth weight babies. As a precaution, it is safer to avoid caffeine altogether while pregnant.

Alcoholic Drinks. Caffeine has no effect on the metabolism of alcohol by the liver and thus does not reduce blood alcohol concentrations (it does not “sober you up”) or reduce impairment due to alcohol consumption

The Buzz on Caffeine

Product	Amount	Caffeine	Product	Amount	Caffeine
Espresso Coffee	8 oz	502 mg	Excedrin	Per capsule	65 mg
Starbucks Grande Coffee	16 oz	400 mg	Mountain Dew	12 oz	55 mg
Starbucks House Blend Coffee	16 oz	259 mg	Coca-Cola Black	8 oz	46 mg
Rockstar Zero Carb	16 oz	243 mg	Vitamin Water Energy	20 oz	42 mg
Starbucks double shot	6.5 oz	130 mg	Green tea	6 oz	40 mg
7 Eleven Big Gulp Diet Coke	32 oz	124 mg	Snapple, lemon	12 oz	38 mg
Crystal Light Energy	16 oz	120 mg	Coca-Cola	12 oz	34.5 mg
Brewed Coffee (Drip)	5 oz	115 mg	Midol	Per capsule	32 mg
Red Bull	12 oz	115 mg	Dark Chocolate	1 oz	20 mg
Chai Tea	12 oz	100 mg	Hot Chocolate	8 oz	5 mg
Starbucks tall latte	12 oz	75 mg	Milk Chocolate	8 oz	4 mg
Ben & Jerry's Coffee Buzz Ice Cream	8 oz	72 mg	Decaffeinated Coffee	8 oz	2-4 mg
Iced Tea	12 oz	70 mg	Sprite	12 oz	0 mg

Killing the Buzz on Caffeine

- **Switch to decaffeinated** beverages or alternate between caffeinated and decaffeinated beverages throughout the day.
- **Reduce the number** of caffeinated drinks you have every day. If you have coffee in the morning and a soda in the afternoon, try skipping the soda and replace it with water or juice.
- **Brew tea** for a shorter time. The less time you brew it, the less caffeine it will contain. Try herbal teas which usually don't contain caffeine.
- **Watch out** for soft drinks and energy drinks which may contain added caffeine. Look to see if the caffeine content is listed on the back of the nutrition label or within the ingredients section.
- If you are trying to **cut out caffeine**, and feel yourself getting a headache, try having a smaller amount of caffeine to alleviate the headache.
- Some over-the-counter medications contain large doses of caffeine so **check the labels** first to see the amount.