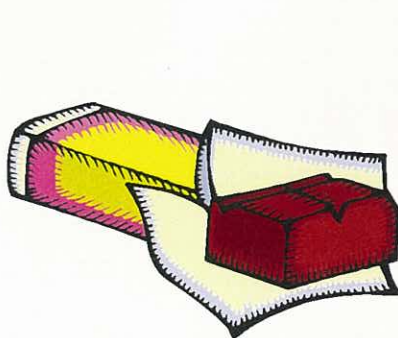
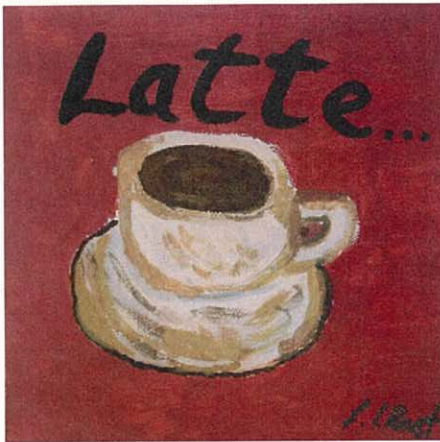


Caffeine and High Energy Drinks

Information for Young People



Caffeine and High Energy Drinks Information for young people

Caffeine is a chemical present in coffee, tea, and in many high energy drinks such as Red Bull and Coca Cola. It acts as a stimulant to the heart and central nervous system, and is also known to increase blood pressure in the short term, so people tend to use it to make them feel more awake. The high energy drinks also contain taurine, which is an amino acid and is said to increase alertness. Researchers in America found that heart rate and blood pressure increased in healthy volunteers who were sitting down to watch movies when they had been drinking high energy drinks.

It is advised that people limit their caffeine intake to 300mg per day or less to avoid the health risks such as high blood pressure. This table shows the average amount of caffeine in certain drinks:

Food	Caffeine content
Coffee (mg/cup)	
Instant	61 to 70mg
Percolated ground	97 to 125mg
Tea (mg/cup)	15 to 75mg
Cocoa (mg/cup)	10 to 17mg
Chocolate bar	60 to 70mg
Cola drinks (mg/12oz can)	43 to 65mg
Red Bull	80mg

As well as stimulating the heart and central nervous system, caffeine is known to do the following:

- ♦ Makes your blood more `sludgy' by raising the level of fatty acids in the blood.
- ♦ Causes messages to be passed along your nervous system more quickly
- ♦ Stimulates blood circulation
- ♦ Raises blood pressure
- ♦ Causes your stomach to produce more acid
- ♦ Irritates the stomach lining
- ♦ Makes digestion less effective by relaxing the muscles of your intestinal system
- ♦ Its diuretic effect caused increased urination
- ♦ Stimulates the cortex of your brain heightening the intensity of mental activity. This can result in a temporary feeling of alertness and, in the short term, banishes drowsiness and feelings of fatigue. In those who already have high levels of anxiety the heightened intensity of mental activity can produce unpleasant effects.
- ♦ Affects the length and quality of sleep. Heavy caffeine users suffer from sleep-deprivation because their nervous system is too stimulated to allow them deep, restful or prolonged sleep.
- ♦ The American Medical Journal has reported a correlation between caffeine and decreased bone density or osteoporosis in women.



Young People's Q

NEGATIVE REASONS FOR TAKING CAFFEINE

You can't sleep
Can cause heart attack
The crash - the after affects of it
Its bad for me
Can't sleep afterwards
You may go hyper - and hurt yourself or others

Which drink do you think contains the most Caffeine?

1. Pro Plus Tablets
2. Red Bull
3. Coffee
4. Fizzy drinks
5. Chocolate

Why do you like taking Caffeine?

Makes me go hyper
I like it
I enjoy the taste of the drinks
You hit the roof and you have faster reactions
I get more energy

Name as many drinks as possible that you think contain caffeine?

Red Bull, Boost, Red Relentless, Kick, Red Lucozade, Irn Bru, Coffee, Tea

Notes on Caffeine

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What does caffeine do to your body?

Increases blood sugar
Brings up heart rate
Bad stuff
Messes up your body
Stimulant - your whole body becomes alert
Makes your heart beat faster

s as
ink

Rooster,
Devil, Coke,

POSTIVE REASONS FOR TAKING CAFFEINE

Wakes you up
Keeps you awake
Stay awake longer
You feel stronger
I can study longer
You get energy
You can do more & do it faster

In addition to the effects already given, prolonged or heavy caffeine use can produce more uncomfortable experiences:

- ♦ 'Caffeine nerves' a jittery feeling with shaking hands, palpitations, and wobbliness in the legs.
- ♦ Caffeine addiction which involves nervousness, irritability, agitation, headaches or ringing in the ears.
- ♦ Causes your adrenal glands to release their hormones into your bloodstream
- ♦ Causes blood sugar, or blood glucose, to be released from storage through the effects of the adrenal hormones. This gives you a temporary lift but...
- ♦ ...requires your pancreas to over-work. This is because your pancreas now has to produce extra insulin to reduce this extra blood sugar. Once the extra insulin has 'mopped up' the extra blood sugar your temporary lift from the caffeine ends.

Addiction to Caffeine can cause withdrawal symptoms when the levels drop in the system. These are usually a headache, feeling jittery, palpitations, and problems associated with blood sugar changes that leave folk with hypoglycaemia (sweaty, light-headedness, craving for sugary foods), and markedly poor concentration. This can affect school work quite badly.



If you feel you have been taking too much caffeine, it is important not to stop taking it completely straight away. To avoid uncomfortable withdrawal effects it is wise to ease off caffeine over a period of 7-14 days to reduce the discomfort. Reduce and then stop the richest sources (especially coffee and Red Bull) first. It is unwise, particularly if you are a heavy user, to suddenly stop caffeine altogether.

Reducing caffeine too quickly can cause a quite dramatic drop in blood pressure, due to the body becoming over-sensitive to adenosine, and this can cause more blood to gather in the head producing a migraine-like headache.

Muscle cramps, giddiness, excessive sleepiness, and lack of concentration are other common withdrawal effects from going 'cold turkey' on caffeine.

When you stop caffeine you allow your body to catch up on its lost rest. This takes some time. Using caffeine to force your-self into activity is like flogging an exhausted horse.

For the first few weeks after stopping caffeine you may find that you are sleeping deeper and for longer. For this reason it is a good idea to allow yourself an extra hour per night for a few weeks, increasing this if you continue to experience lethargy in the mornings.

If you feel drowsy during the day use breathing exercises preferably out of doors, to alert yourself. And remind yourself that the drowsiness is a sign that you are allowing your body to get back into a more normal state and that your natural energy levels will soon return once things have got back to normal after the onslaught of the caffeine regime.

True or false

Have a look at the following question and discuss them with your friends:

Caffeine is good for you TRUE FALSE

Caffeine increases the blood pressure TRUE FALSE

Coming off caffeine too quickly causes headaches
 TRUE FALSE

Caffeine withdrawal reduces concentration
 TRUE FALSE

Caffeine sobers you up TRUE FALSE



This information booklet has been produced through partnership working by:

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&

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