



## Caffeine Fact Sheet



### What is caffeine?

Caffeine is an addictive drug found in:

TEA, COFFEE, CHOCOLATE, SOFT DRINKS

e.g. COLA & MANY NON-PRESCRIPTION ANALGESICS

**Medically:** It is used as a cardiac stimulant & a mild diuretic (it increases urine production)

**Recreationally:** It is used to provide a 'boost of energy' or feeling of heightened alertness, reducing tiredness, so often used to help stay awake longer or late into the night. Many people feel that they 'can't function in the morning' without their coffee to give them the kick start to the day!

### Caffeine is also a stimulant

Caffeine stimulates the nervous system resulting in high levels (in particular) of adrenaline, so mimicking the stress response known as 'fight or flight'. Taking an excessive amount of caffeine is like being in a high state of arousal with your stress reaction working at full stretch!

### Caffeine Benefits?

- Caffeine blocks the chemical in the brain that makes you drowsy so you ... **'feel alert'!**
- Caffeine stimulates the production of adrenaline to give you an ... **'energy boost'!**
- Caffeine manipulates dopamine production in the brain to make you ... **'feel good'!**

**Caffeine Problems** (Most problems are due to the effects of consuming caffeine long term)

- Caffeine can cause restlessness, difficulty in falling asleep & a decreased quality of sleep.
- The time it takes the body to eliminate half of the total amount of caffeine consumed, is between 5 to 7 hours, so a mug of coffee with 200mg of caffeine taken late afternoon will still leave 100mg of caffeine in the system at bedtime. This may allow you to fall asleep, but your body will probably miss out on the benefits of deep sleep. This deficit adds up, the next day you feel tired & need that caffeine to jump-start the day! The cycle continues!
- When the caffeine levels fall in your system & the adrenalin surge wears off you can face fatigue & depression So ... you take more caffeine to get the adrenaline going again. Having your body permanently in a state of emergency all day is not a healthy option. This is why caffeine is not a good means of coping with stress. Far from helping by keeping you awake, alert & feeling good, it is actually increasing your stress responses still further, causing a downward spiral of problems!

- Caffeine increases the heart rate, which is made worse if you are also stressed, as the adrenaline from the stress response has already increased the heart rate. This is particularly serious for those who **already** have high blood pressure or a heart problem.
- Caffeine also stimulates the production of acid by the stomach. This can cause heartburn, indigestion & aggravate ulcers. Again, these symptoms are made worse if you are stressed as the activity of the gut & stomach reduces during the stress response.
- There is also evidence suggesting that high caffeine intake can lead to increased blood cholesterol through the action of adrenalin.

### So how much caffeine is too much?

- A generally considered normal/low level is 300mg of caffeine or less a day.
- A moderate consumption is between 300mg to 600mg of caffeine a day.
- A high consumption is between 600mg to 900 mg of caffeine a day.
- OVER 1000mg (1 GRAM) OF CAFFEINE A DAY... YOU ARE HOOKED!!!



**If you have a HIGH CONSUMPTION of daily caffeine, consider cutting down your intake**

### Caffeine & Alcohol

Caffeine is a stimulant & alcohol is a depressant so they have opposite effects on the nervous system. However giving caffeine to someone who is drunk **will not** sober him or her up. Caffeine may make the person feel more alert, but will not lower the person's blood alcohol level, which is what determines the degree of impairment.

In fact, caffeine can make the drunk driver even more dangerous. By increasing alertness, drivers believe that they can do things they are not capable of. Only time will sober a person up... approximately 1 hour per drink once he or she has had too many!

### Withdrawal symptoms

The most common symptom is a throbbing headache, usually within 18 –24 hours after the last dose of caffeine. The headaches can last from 1 to 5 days & can be alleviated with a non-prescription analgesic. Many will have caffeine in them, but much less than coffee.

### How do I cut down or stop?

- Keep a diary for a week to see how much caffeine you **really** consume on a daily/weekly basis. This will include all forms of caffeine, tea, coffee, coke & other canned drinks with caffeine, chocolate & medications.
- The easiest way is to reduce slowly depending on your consumption level by 1 to 2 cups a day. If you are drinking more than 10 cups of coffee a day, you really do need to cut down.

## How Much Caffeine Is There In What?

Beverage/Food/Drugs	Serving Size	Mg. Caffeine/Serving
<b>COFFEE</b>		
BREWED	7oz / 200mls	100 – 165
INSTANT	7oz / 200mls	65 – 100
DECAF BREWED	7oz / 200mls	3 – 4
DECAF INSTANT	7oz / 200mls	2 - 3
CAPPUCCINO	6oz / 180mls	74
CAFE AMARETTO	6oz / 180mls	60
ESPRESSO	1.5 – 2 oz / 60mls	100
<b>TEA</b>		
BLACK: 1 MINUTE BREW	5oz / 150mls	20 – 34
3 MINUTE BREW	5oz / 150mls	35 – 46
5 MINUTE BREW	5oz / 150mls	39 – 50
GREEN: 1 MINUTE BREW	5oz / 150mls	9 – 19
3 MINUTE BREW	5oz / 150mls	20 – 33
5 MINUTE BREW	5oz / 150mls	26 – 36
<b>SOFT DRINKS</b>	5oz / 150mls	2 – 15
<b>COCA- COLA</b>		
COCA – COLA	12oz / 330mls	45.6
DIET COLA	12oz / 330mls	45.6
Dr. PEPPER	12oz / 330mls	39.6
PEPSI COLA	12oz / 330mls	37.2
DIET PEPSI	12oz / 330mls	35.4
7 UP	12oz / 330mls	0
<b>CHOCOLATE</b>		
CADBURY'S BAR MILK CHOCOLATE	1oz / 28gms	15
DARK CHOCOLATE	1oz / 28gms	90
BAKING CHOCOLATE	1oz / 28gms	25 - 35
CHOCOLATE MILK	8oz / 240mls	8