

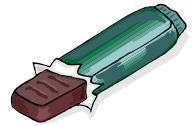
# Caffeine & Kids: Grounds for Concern

## What is caffeine?



Caffeine is found in the leaves, seeds or fruit of many plants. It is also made in labs.

Some soft drinks, chocolate, coffee, tea, iced mocha drinks and energy drinks with names like "energy", "rush", "adrenaline", "bull", pain relievers and other over-the-counter pills can also contain caffeine.



The food label does not often list how much caffeine is in the product. Some natural sources to look for in the ingredient list are coffee or coffee beans (not coffee flavouring), green or black tea leaves, guarana, yerba (also called yerba mate) and cocoa beans.

## What happens when you have too much?

Too much caffeine can cause stomach upsets, nervousness, irritability, dizziness, and headaches. It can interfere with sleep.

Some people are more sensitive to caffeine than others. Children feel the effects of caffeine more than adults because they have smaller bodies.

Caffeine is addictive. There are withdrawal symptoms. Someone who stops using caffeine suddenly may experience severe headaches, muscle aches, temporary depression and irritability.

### Did You Know?

Caffeine is a stimulant. It can cause side effects.

## Maximum Recommended Daily Caffeine Intakes

Children 4 – 6 years of age	45 mg
Children 7 – 9 years of age	62.5 mg
Children 10 – 12 years of age	85 mg
Women who are planning to become pregnant, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers	300 mg
Adults	400 – 450 mg

*Health Canada: It's Your Health – Caffeine*



## How much is too much?

Caffeine does affect children more than adults. Even low levels can affect their behaviour.

Health Canada has not set a maximum for teenagers. It can be reasonable to assume that their maximum daily limit falls between those of older children and adults.

British Columbia Ministry of Education suggests that schools don't sell items with more than 25 mg of caffeine.

## Where is caffeine found?

Many foods and beverages that contain caffeine are sources of empty calories and have no vitamins and minerals. As a result, it is important to limit how many soft drinks, coffee, tea and iced tea you drink so that they do not replace nutritious beverage choices such as milk that is needed for growth.

It is not difficult for a child to consume more than the recommended maximum amounts of caffeine, especially due to the large portion sizes that are now available. The table below shows the amount of caffeine in various beverages and food.

<b>Food or Beverage</b>	<b>Amount of caffeine</b>
Brewed coffee - 237 ml/ 8 oz. cup	<b>135 mg</b>
Tea (average blend) - 237 ml/8 oz. cup	<b>43 mg</b>
Cola beverage - 355 ml/12 oz. can - 591 ml/20 oz. bottle	<b>36 - 46 mg</b> <b>61 - 78 mg</b>
Iced tea - 355 ml/ 12 oz. can - 591 ml / 20 oz. bottle	<b>25 mg</b> <b>43 mg</b>
Chocolate milk - 237 ml/ 8 oz. cup	<b>8 mg</b>
Hot chocolate mix - 1 envelope	<b>5 mg</b>
Candy, milk chocolate - 50 grams	<b>13 mg</b>
Energy drink (i.e. Red Bull)	<b>80 mg</b>

## How to avoid caffeine?

Always check the ingredient list for natural sources of caffeine such as chocolate, coffee, tea and guarana. If a beverage has artificial caffeine added to it, then it must say so on the label.