

Caffeine

What is Caffeine?

Some people don't realize that caffeine is a **drug and can be addictive**. It is a **stimulant** that can be found in many **pain relievers** and **cold medications** as well as in **foods** and **beverages**.

Here are some commonly used products that contain caffeine:

- Coffee (1 cup) – 100 mg
- Instant Coffee (1 cup) – 30-100 mg
- Decaffeinated Coffee (1 cup) – 1-10 mg
- Tea (1 cup) – 10-90 mg
- Stimulants (1 tablet) – 100-250 mg
- Painkillers (1 tablet) – 30-100 mg
- Cola drinks (10 oz/280 ml) – 30-60 mg
- Chocolate (1.4 oz/40 g) – 20-25 mg

Caffeine and Addiction

As the body gets used to caffeine, it needs more and more of it to get the same effect.

People become **mildly dependent** on caffeine from regularly consuming fairly high daily doses.

If a person suddenly stops consuming caffeine they may experience **withdrawal symptoms** such as **headaches** and **sleep problems**. They may also feel **irritable, tired and depressed**.

Withdrawal symptoms begin **12 to 24 hours** after you stop consuming caffeine. Most symptoms will pass within a **few days**.

Short Term Effects

Less than **200 mg** of caffeine can make a person more **alert** and **less tired**. It can also increase the ability to do physical work and improve thinking.

Small amounts of caffeine can also cause an **increase in blood pressure** and **urination**. Some people may develop a **rapid and irregular heartbeat** after consuming larger amounts of caffeine.

More than **500 mg** of caffeine can make a person feel **irritable, restless and nervous**. They may also experience **tremors, insomnia** and occasionally, a mild form of **delirium**.

Caffeine may **interfere with sleep**.

Drinking coffee or tea during or after meals **decreases iron absorption**.

Caffeine should not be used for dieting as it will **not suppress your appetite**.

Caffeine **doesn't** help drunk people to **sober up**.

Long Term Effects

Daily use of low to moderate amounts of caffeine by healthy adults does not appear to cause any negative effects.

Larger doses may **cause chronic insomnia, constant anxiety** and **depression**, and **stomach ulcers**.

There is some evidence that consumption of more than **300 mg** of caffeine in a day is associated with **miscarriages** and **low birth weight babies**. Women should consider **limiting or eliminating** caffeine intake **while pregnant**.