



Caffeine and energy drinks

Caffeine is a stimulant drug that comes from a range of plants such as tea, coffee, cacao pod (used to make cocoa and chocolate) and guarana (used in energy bars and energy drinks).

How much caffeine is your family having?

Drink or product	Size or amount	Caffeine content
Tea	150 ml	30-100 mg
Cocoa or hot chocolate	150 ml	30-60 mg
Coffee – instant	150 ml	60-100 mg
Coffee – percolated	150 ml	100-150 mg
Coffee – decaffeinated	150 ml	2-4 mg
Cola drink like Coke	250 ml	40-50 mg
Diet cola drink like Diet Coke	250 ml	40-50 mg
Diet Coke caffeine free	250 ml	2 mg
Chocolate milk drink like Choc Milk	250 ml	2-7 mg
Energy drink like Red Bull	250 ml	80 mg
Dark chocolate bar	55 g	50 mg
Milk chocolate bar	55 g	3-20 mg

Some things to think about before giving products containing caffeine to your child

- Caffeine can affect a growing brain so food or drink containing high levels of caffeine, such as energy drinks are not recommended for children under 15 years.
- Children who consume high levels of caffeine (eg through energy drinks) may suffer from increased heart rate, excitability, sleep problems, bed-wetting and anxiety.
- Caffeine is a diuretic (makes us produce more urine) and can quickly cause dehydration, which can lead to overheating and dizziness.
- Energy drinks should not be given to young children after heavy exercise.
- Energy and cola drinks also contain high amounts of sugar (about 5 teaspoons per can) and while some energy drinks claim to include natural vitamins and minerals, these are easily obtained from fresh fruit and vegetables.
- You might like to talk to your child about alternatives to foods that contain caffeine (eg muesli bars, carob bars, flavoured milks, juices, water).
- More than 350 mg of caffeine a day for an adult (about 4 energy drinks or 4 cups of coffee) is enough to cause dependence on this drug.
- A person who is dependent on caffeine is likely to suffer withdrawal symptoms (headaches, fatigue, sweating, muscle pain) within 24 hours of their last dose.



Thank you for playing a vital role in your child's health and drug education.