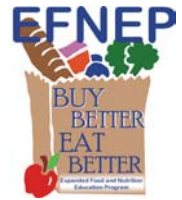




Family Nutrition In Action

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Caffeine Anyone?

Pure caffeine is odorless and bitter tasting. Most people don't want pure caffeine. But to most people, a cup of coffee, tea, or a glass of cola sounds pretty good -- and we get a lot of caffeine from coffee, tea, and cola. We can also get a lot of caffeine from some pain relievers and weight loss pills -- including *herbal* or *natural* formulas. We can even get caffeine from chocolate.

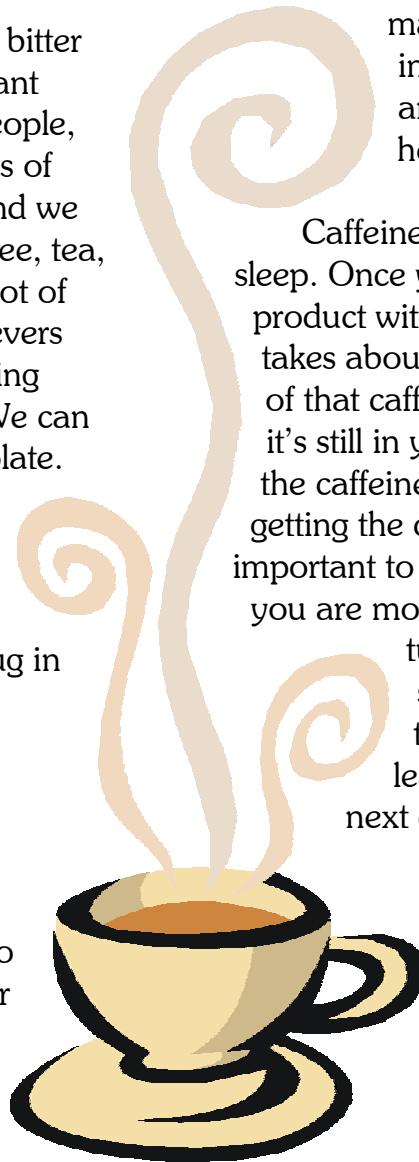
Caffeine and Health

Caffeine is a stimulant. It is the most commonly used drug in the United States and in the world. Caffeine is not really addictive, but it can be habit forming.

For most people, caffeine, in moderation seems to have no effect on health. On the other hand, if you have hypertension, caffeine may make it worse -- at least temporarily. Caffeine is

helpful because it can keep us awake and alert. But it can also make us nervous, impatient, and dizzy, and it can cause headaches.

Caffeine can interfere with sleep. Once you've consumed a product with caffeine in it, it takes about 6 hours for just half of that caffeine to wear off. If it's still in your body at night, the caffeine keeps you from getting the deep sleep that is so important to your health. Instead, you are more likely to toss and turn and get up several times during the night, which leaves you tired the next day.



How Much is OK?

Caffeine seems to have the same effect on children as it does on adults. But the effect of caffeine on a person depends a lot on the size of the person and how caffeine-sensitive the person is. Like many chemicals, caffeine is measured in milligrams. (It takes 28,000 milligrams to equal 1 ounce). A general recommendation is that adults should not have more than 300 milligrams of caffeine a day and that children should not have more than 100 milligrams of caffeine a day.

Food and drink manufacturers are not required to list caffeine on the product label unless caffeine has been added to the item. Even then, the label does not have to specify how much caffeine the item contains. People expect caffeine in certain products like coffee or tea. But, you wouldn't expect it in orange soda. Sunkist orange soda has caffeine but other brands do not. Chocolate has only a little caffeine, but chocolate has another chemical in it that work likes caffeine so your body feels like it's getting more than it really is. The amount of caffeine in several drinks, desserts, and drugs is listed below.

Product/Item	Serving Size	Average amount of caffeine (in milligrams)
Drinks:		
Coffee	8 ounces	110
Tea	8 ounces	60
Ice tea	8 ounces	25
Dark colored colas (Coke, Pepsi, Tab, Dr. Pepper)	12 ounces	50
Light colored colas (Sprite, 7-up)	12 ounces	0
Chocolate milk	8 ounces	6
High energy drinks (XTC, Red Bull)	8 ounces	70-80

Product/Item	Serving Size	Average amount of caffeine (in milligrams)
Desserts:		
Milk chocolate	1 ounce	6
Dark chocolate	1 ounce	20
Chocolate ice cream	½ cup	3
Coffee yogurt	1 cup	45
Drugs:		
Anacin	1 tablet	32
Dristan	1 tablet	30
Excedrin	1 tablet	65
Midol	1 tablet	32
NoDoz	1 tablet	100

Want to Cut Back?

If you are having trouble sleeping at night or if you are too easily stressed during the day, you might want to try cutting back on caffeine. Decaffeinated products are a good choice, but they still have a little bit of caffeine. If you really want to cut out caffeine:

- Drink herbal teas, lemonade, fruit juices, milk, water, seltzer.
- Avoid coffee, green tea, black tea, oolong tea, and colas.
- Avoid chocolate and foods that have chocolate in them.
- Ask a pharmacist about the caffeine level in prescription and over the counter drugs so you'll know what you're getting.
- For a quick burst of energy during the day, try deep breathing, taking a fast walk or stretching.

Caffeine-Free Lemon Mint Ice Tea

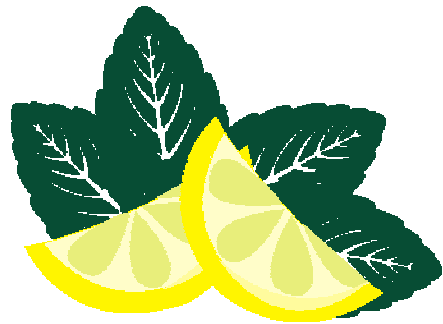
4 mint, herbal tea bags

¼ cup sugar

1 can (6 ounces) lemonade concentrate, thawed

Water

- In a large, heat resistant pitcher, steep tea bags in 1 quart (4 cups) boiling water for 10 minutes.
- Remove tea bags and add sugar, stir until dissolved.
- Add the lemonade concentrate and 1 quart (4 cups) cold water.
- Stir well.
- Serve over ice.



For additional information, contact your local County Extension Office:



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