

THE BUZZ ON CAFFEINE

Caffeine - one of the most widely consumed stimulant - is found in coffee, tea, soda and even hot chocolate. Categorized as a stimulant drug, caffeine is a naturally occurring substance that is added to many different products to speed up the messaging between the brain and the body. It is reported that about 75% of children and adolescents consume caffeine daily, despite its known effects on the development of brain functions and other organs. Limited research looks at the long term effects of caffeine consumption on children and adolescents, so it's important to understand how much is considered safe to consume, what products contain caffeine and how to tell if a child is consuming too much.

How Much is Too Much?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has no guidelines for safe caffeine consumption for children. They do recommend adults to consume < 400 milligrams per day.

The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages children and adolescents from the use of caffeine or any other stimulants.

However, the Canadian government set recommendations for daily caffeine limits for children under the age of 12. These recommendations include: :

Age <4 years:

No caffeine consumption

Ages 4-6 years:

< 45 milligrams per day

Ages 7-9 years:

< 62 milligrams per day

Ages 10-12 years:

< 85 milligrams per day

The Mayo Clinic recommends:

Ages 12- 18 years:

< 100 milligrams per day

What Has Caffeine and How Much?



Brewed Coffee (8 oz)
95- 200 milligrams
(varies with coffee beans)



Decaf Brewed Coffee (8 oz)
2- 12 milligrams
(varies with coffee beans)



Green/Black Tea (8 oz)
14-70 milligrams



Soda (12 oz can)
35-55 milligrams



Energy Drink
16oz: 150- 160 milligrams
2 oz (5 hour): 200 milligrams



Chocolate Bar
Milk: 9 milligrams
Dark: 18 milligrams



Sport Gels
25-100 milligrams

What Happens if My Child Consumes Too Much Caffeine?

Because of caffeine's effect on the central nervous system, gastrointestinal tract and urinary tract, possible adverse side-effects can be, but are not limited to:

- Irritability
 - Jitteriness
 - Insomnia
 - Anxiety
 - Overstimulation
 - Elevated Heart Rate
 - Elevated Blood Pressure
 - Restlessness
 - Gastric Irritation
 - Impaired Calcium Metabolism
 - Dehydration
 - Mild Diuretic
 - Addiction
- (from overuse and reliance)

Dental Note:

Many caffeinated products are acidic and full of sugar. Consuming these products for extended periods of time throughout the day can increase your child's risk for cavities. When consuming, try to finish within 20-30 minutes and rinse with water after!