

Caffeine in Diet

Caffeine is a naturally occurring substance in certain plant parts, including coffee and cocoa beans, tea leaves and kola nuts. It is available in many beverages we consume and in many over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs. Caffeine is a stimulant to the central nervous system. It can quicken the pace of the heart and lungs, cause the kidneys to produce more fluid, and assist with combating fatigue. Excessive caffeine intake can cause jitters, anxiety, insomnia, stomach irritation, and headaches.

Important points to note regarding Caffeine:

1. In Pregnancy it is recommended not to consume more than 300 mg of caffeine on a regular basis, and note that nursing mothers are also advised to maintain the same level of caffeine as in pregnancy.
2. Caffeine causes mild increases in the loss of calcium for the body. However this does not decrease the fact that consuming chocolate milk is better than no milk consumption in providing the body's needs for calcium.
3. Caffeine helps some medications be better and more quickly absorbed.
4. Regular caffeine consumption decreases the diuretic effect of the caffeine as the body becomes used to it.
5. People with certain medical conditions, such as: high blood pressure, gastritis, heartburn, or ulcers are advised to cut back on caffeine.
6. Caffeine sensitivity may increase as we age.
7. Most healthy adults can take in 200-300 mg of caffeine daily and notice no physical harm.
8. It is typical for most Americans to consume 600-800 mg of caffeine a day, but heavy coffee drinkers can consume 2000 mg daily.

Food Item	Servings size	Average amount of caffeine in milligrams	Food Item	Servings size	Average amount of caffeine in milligrams
Coffee Brewed, drip Brewed, percolator Instant Decaf, brewed Decaf, instant	8 oz	140 80 3 2	Soft Drinks Cont. Coca-Cola Diet Coke Shasta Cola Shasta Cherry Cola Shasta Diet Cola Shasta Diet Cherry Cola		46 46 45 45 45 45
Espresso Regular Decaf	Single serving	100 5	Mr. PIBB Dr. Pepper Sugar-Free Dr. Pepper		40 40 40
Tea Black, brewed in 3 min. Instant Decaf Ice tea	6 oz 12 oz	40 30 1 30	Pepsi-Cola Diet Pepsi RC Cola Diet RC Canada Dry Jamaica Cola Canada Dry Diet Cola		38 36 36 36 30 1
Chocolate Cocoa, dry powder Baking chocolate Chocolate syrup Chocolate milk Hot chocolate Milk chocolate Chocolate pudding	1 tbsp 1 ounce 2 tbsp 1 cup 1 cup 1 ½ ounce ½ cup	10 25 5 10 5 10 5	Over-the-Counter Medicines Vivarin NoDoz Excedrin Anacin Midol	1 tablet	200 100 65 32 32
Soft drinks Cola type, regular & diet 7-up & Root beer Jolt Sugar-Free Mr. Pibb Mountain Dew Mello Yello TAB	12 oz	35-45 0 72 59 54 53 47			

Sources: 10th American Dietetic Association Caffeine Handout, 1999 & National Soft drink Association