

caffeine

Caffeine comes from coffee, correct? True, but it is also found in many other products such as tea, chocolate, cola and some headache drugs.

Caffeine is defined as a drug because it affects the central nervous system. It is categorised as a stimulant because caffeine speeds up production of nerve impulses.

Caffeine increases dopamine levels in the brain. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that influences certain parts of the brain and activates the pleasure centre. Caffeine blocks adenosine reception so you feel alert, it then injects adrenaline into the system to give you a boost. Caffeine also manipulates dopamine production to make you feel good but only for a short period of time.

When taken in liquid form, caffeine produces a number of mild effects on the body. A small dose such as one cup of coffee can have the following effects:

- increased body temperature and metabolism
- Increased urination
- Increased alertness
- Stimulated secretion of gastric acids
- Stimulated secretion of serotonin
- Dehydration

In large doses, caffeine can cause headaches, jitters and nervousness, along with reduced or delayed sleep patterns. It can also interfere with the body's absorption of minerals such as calcium and iron.

Caffeine is a drug and can be addictive. We recommend drinking no more than two cups of caffeinated drinks per day. If drinking coffee, organic is best but remember it should be black with no sugar added. If you would like to use a sweetener, try Stevia or Xylitol which are herbal alternatives.

If you are drinking more than two caffeinated drinks per day don't give up cold turkey as you may suffer from withdrawal symptoms. Instead, cut down by one cup per day every three or four days until you are down to two cups or less per day.

Did you know?

For every caffeinated drink you have throughout the day, you should follow it with a glass of water to avoid dehydration.



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