

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



FEBRUARY 2024

Download this and past issues
of the Adult, Youth, Parent, and
Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:
[http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/
content/health-bulletins](http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins)

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

LIMIT YOUR CHILD'S EXPOSURE TO CAFFEINE



Many adults drink a cup of coffee in the morning to help wake up or a soda in the afternoon for a pick-me-up. That's because of the caffeine. Caffeine is a natural chemical found in tea leaves, coffee beans, cacao (used to make chocolate), and kola nuts (gives cola its flavor). Caffeine is classified as a drug because it stimulates the central nervous system. It can make people feel more alert and energetic, and has similar effects in kids and adults. While food and drinks with caffeine are everywhere, it is wise to limit caffeine consumption, especially in children.

Continued on the next page ➔

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Children should consume water throughout the day and milk as a part of some meals. Fruit-flavored water, club soda, and seltzer are other drink alternatives that are low in sugar and do not contain caffeine.

➔ Continued from the previous page

In both children and adults, too much caffeine can cause negative health effects such as:

- jitters and nervousness
- upset stomach
- headaches
- problems with concentration
- trouble sleeping
- faster heart rate
- higher blood pressure

Especially in young children, it doesn't take a lot of caffeine to produce these effects. Caffeine sensitivity refers to the amount of caffeine that will cause an effect in someone. Caffeine sensitivity is mostly related to daily caffeine intake, but the smaller the person, the less caffeine you need to produce side effects. Kids are more sensitive to caffeine than adults.

Caffeinated drinks, like sodas, coffee, tea, and energy drinks, often also contain lots of sugar. Kids and teens who fill up on them get lots of empty calories without the vitamins and minerals they need for their bodies to grow and develop. Children ages 12 and younger do not need any caffeine at all; teens are encouraged not to consume any more than 100 mg daily.

Parents can help children look at food and drink labels to determine if the item contains caffeine, help monitor how much they consume, and guide children toward alternative drink and treat choices. The list below contains common sources of caffeine and how much caffeine a serving contains.

- **Jolt soft drink** (12-ounce can): 71.2 mg
- **Mountain Dew** (12-ounce can): 55 mg
- **Coca-Cola** (12-ounce can): 34 mg
- **7-Up** (12-ounce can): 0 mg
- **Brewed coffee**, drip method (5 ounces): 115 mg
- **Iced tea** (12 ounces): 70 mg
- **Dark chocolate** (1 ounce): 20 mg
- **Milk chocolate** (1 ounce): 6 mg



Children should consume water throughout the day and milk as a part of some meals. Fruit-flavored water, club soda, and seltzer are other drink alternatives that are low in sugar and do not contain caffeine. You can still allow the occasional soda or tea — just make it decaffeinated.

If your child consumes a lot of caffeine, cut back slowly. Abruptly stopping caffeine may cause withdrawal symptoms (like headaches, low energy, and irritability), especially for those who consume a lot of it.

REFERENCE:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-caffeine.html>

ADULT
HEALTH BULLETIN

Written by:

Katherine Jury, MS

Edited by: Alyssa Simms

Designed by: Rusty Manseau

Stock images:

Adobe Stock

