

ENERGY DRINKS & CAFFEINE: THE FACTS

Energy drinks and energy “shots” have become increasingly popular in recent years. Many people consume them with the belief that they will assist in endurance, concentration and stamina.

People might not know that energy drinks, and particularly energy “shots”, can contain high levels of caffeine or ingredients containing caffeine such as guarana plant extract.

WHAT IS CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a drug which comes from the leaves, beans or nuts of different plants. It is a stimulant drug which means that it speeds up the brain and nervous system.

In addition to being present in energy drinks, caffeine is also found in coffee, chocolate, tea and some soft drinks. The caffeine content of drinks where it is found naturally (tea, coffee, chocolate) can also vary widely depending on how they are prepared.

Some prescription and over the counter medications may also contain caffeine, such as cough medicine, headache tablets and slimming products.

MIXING ALCOHOL AND ENERGY DRINKS

Alcohol is a depressant drug that slows down the brain and nervous system. Mixing alcohol with any other drug can be risky. Mixing energy drinks with alcohol can place your body under stress.

As you drink more alcohol and become intoxicated, you may lose track of the number of energy drinks (and caffeine) you consume. This can increase the risk of caffeine toxicity.

HOW CAN I GET HELP?

Contact your medical practitioner if you are worried about your caffeine intake or that of a friend or family member.

In the case of an emergency you should call **Triple Zero (000)**.

EFFECTS OF CAFFEINE

Caffeine can affect people in different ways and how it does depends on:

- how much you consume
- your height and weight
- your age
- your general health
- if you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- your mood
- whether you have caffeine often
- whether you have caffeine on its own, with food or with other drugs (including alcohol).

Small amounts of caffeine may have the following effects:

- you feel more awake
- your heart beats faster
- you urinate more
- your body temperature rises

- your digestive system produces more acid.

Excessive consumption can lead to **caffeine toxicity** which can cause:

- heart palpitations
- nausea
- vomiting
- headaches
- becoming confused, have hallucinations or be very excited
- insomnia
- nervousness
- pregnancy loss
- dependence (and later withdrawal).

Large amounts of caffeine may make the problem worse for people who already have heart problems or anxiety disorders.

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR CAFFEINE INTAKE

It is important to be aware of how many energy drinks or energy “shots” you have consumed, so that you can keep track of your overall caffeine intake.

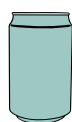
How much caffeine is safe?

Your body’s response to caffeine will depend on a number of factors including your weight and health. Although a safe level has not been determined yet, as a guide:

- Healthy adults of around 70kg weight should aim for no more than 400mg per day (about 4 cups of coffee)
- Pregnant and breast feeding women should have less than 200mg per day (about 2 cups of coffee)
- Children and young people should limit their intake of caffeinated drinks.

Energy drinks are required by law to indicate their caffeine content on the label, however the level can vary.

77mg¹



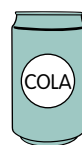
250ml
Energy drink

158mg¹



500ml
Energy drink

48.75mg¹



375ml
Typical Cola drink

60mg¹



250ml
Instant coffee

80mg¹



250ml
Brewed coffee

107mg¹



1
**Short black/
espresso coffee**

27mg¹



250ml
Cup of tea

10mg¹



60gm
Milk chocolate

¹ Average caffeine level, NSW Food Authority 2010

INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) NSW operates 24 hours, 7 days a week to provide education, information, referral, crisis counselling and support. Call (02) 9361 8000 (Sydney metro) or 1800 422 599 (outside Sydney metro and interstate) or visit www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council provides links to Aboriginal community controlled health services across NSW. Visit www.ahmrc.org.au for information about AHMRC members including a regional map, information and links to members websites.

www.alcohol.gov.au provides information about related health issues and Australian government policy.

Drug and Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC) provides services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Contact DAMEC on (02) 8113 1301 or for counselling and support services for CALD communities call (02) 8706 0150.

Drug Info provides facts and resources on alcohol and other drugs and the prevention of related harm. Visit www.druginfo.adf.org.au

State Library of New South Wales Drug Info provides up to date information on alcohol and other drugs in public libraries throughout NSW. Visit www.druginfo.sl.nsw.gov.au

eheadspace provides mental health and wellbeing support, information and services for young people (12-25 years) and their family and friends. Visit www.eheadspace.org.au

Family Drug Support provides 24-7 telephone support to families in crisis due to drug and alcohol issues. Call the Helpline on 1300 368 186 or visit www.fds.org.au

Kids Helpline is a free, 24 hour counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years. Counselling is offered via the Kids Helpline website www.kidshelp.com.au or email, or call 1800 55 1800.

Nepean Youth Drug and Alcohol Service (NYDAS) works within a holistic model of care to address a range of issues for young people (12 -20 years of age) related to their alcohol and other drug use. Call (02) 4734 2129 or (02) 4734 1333.

NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) is a peak drug user organisation in NSW providing harm reduction information and blood borne virus prevention peer education. Visit www.nuaa.org.au

Poisons Information Hotline 13 11 26 is a 24/7 call centre service available across Australia.

ReachOut is an Australian online youth mental health service with a mobile-friendly site and forums where you can access help, information and support. Visit au.reachout.com

Sexual Health Info Link provides free and confidential sexual health support and information. Visit www.shil.nsw.gov.au

Smart Recovery is a voluntary self-help group that assists people in recovering from alcohol, drug use and other addictive behaviours. Visit www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au

TAFE NSW provides help with education, career development or personal matters. Students can contact a local TAFE/university counsellor. Visit www.tafensw.edu.au

www.yourchoiceonline.com.au is an alcohol education program that aims to challenge perceptions about underage drinking and excessive consumption of alcohol and to educate young people about the health, legal and social consequences of drinking.

Youth Action is the peak organisation for young people in NSW. Visit www.youthaction.org.au and use the search option to access a directory of NSW youth services.

Youth Solutions provides services for young people 12 to 25 years of age and the community including prevention and health promotion, drug and alcohol education, community programs and information and referral. Visit www.youthsolutions.com.au or call (02) 4628 2319 [provides services to young people in Macarthur & Wingecarribee].

24 hour confidential telephone counselling services

NSW: Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. (02) 9361 8000 *Toll free. 1800 422 599

VICTORIA: *Toll free. 1800 888 236

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. (08) 9442 5000 *Toll free. 1800 198 024

QUEENSLAND: Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. (07) 3837 5989 *Toll free. 1800 177 833

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Tel. (08) 8363 8618 *Toll free. 1300 131 340

NORTHERN TERRITORY: Amity Community Service Tel. (08) 8944 6565 *Toll free. 1800 684 372 Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) *Toll free. 1800 131 350

TASMANIA: Alcohol and Drug Information Service *Toll free. 1800 811 994

ACT: Alcohol and Drug Program Tel. (02) 6207 9977

NSW Health aims to reduce drug-related harm for individuals and the community by providing the facts, including the possible health, social and economic consequences of using alcohol and other drugs.

