



# Caffeine Connection

Many people depend upon early morning caffeine to “jump start” their bodies. Others consume caffeinated beverages throughout the day when they are stressed or tired to keep their bodies alert and functioning. However, caffeinated foods and beverages should not replace regular, balanced meals and snacks or adequate sleep (See back for Healthy Alternatives to Caffeine). Although caffeine provides an “energy boost,” the stimulant can also cause anxiety, restlessness, constriction of blood vessels, and an elevated heart rate. For these reasons, it is logical to limit caffeine to 400 mg a day. Below are some common beverages, foods, and over-the-counter medications that contain caffeine.

Caffeine is a central nervous system and metabolic stimulant, and is used both recreationally and medically to reduce physical fatigue and restore mental alertness when unusual weakness or drowsiness occurs. Caffeine content in coffee varies widely depending on the variety of coffee bean and the method of preparation used. Coffee supplies 54% of the total caffeine consumed in the world; tea supplies 43%; and the remainder comes mostly from chocolate products.

## CAFFEINE CONTENT IN MILLIGRAMS (mg)

### Coffee (8oz)

Brewed, 65-120 mg  
 Instant, 40-110 mg  
 Decaffeinated, 2-4 mg

### Tea (8oz)

Brewed, 20-90 mg  
 Instant, 24-31 mg  
 (the longer it steeps, the higher the caffeine)

### Cocoa (8oz)

Serving, 3-32 mg

### Chocolate Milk (8oz)

Serving, 2-8 mg

### Chocolate (1oz)

Dark, 5-35 mg  
 Milk, 1-15 mg

### Coffee/Chocolate Flavored Desserts (1/2 Cup)

Ice Cream, 18-126 mg  
 Frozen Yogurt, 0-25 mg

### Cola Beverage (12oz)

Serving, 30-60 mg

### Pain Relievers (per tablet)

Average, 32-65 mg

### Energy Drinks (8.3oz)

Average, 80 mg

### Energy Bars (68g)

Average, 50 mg

## HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE TO CAFFEINE

- Sleep – Do not underestimate the power of a quality night's sleep. If you generally feel well rested in the morning, you are likely meeting your slumber needs. If not, try the following:
  - Reserve the bedroom for sleep (i.e. remove the computer and television set)
  - Climate Control: keep your bedroom dark, cool, and quiet
  - Maintain a consistent sleep/wake schedule
- Avoid vigorous activity within 2-3 hours of bed time
- Avoid over or undereating in the evening
- Limit fluids before bedtime (if you frequently wake to urinate)
- Avoid caffeinated beverages in the afternoon and evenings
- Take brisk, 10 minute walks when you are feeling fatigued
- Eat consistent, moderate meals and snacks to help regulate your energy level throughout the day
- Go outside for brief sunshine breaks-exposure to bright light helps regulate your body's rhythms

