

## What is America's favorite drug?

You guessed it—caffeine. If you start the day with a strong cup of coffee or tea, you're not alone. The average American drinks 210 milligrams of caffeine a day. That's equivalent to 2-3 cups of coffee.

## How does caffeine work?

Caffeine causes changes in the chemicals of your brain in 2 ways. It mimics adenosine, and binds to all the adenosine receptors in your brain. This prevents the real adenosine from doing its job, which happens to be the slowing down of nerve impulses and the causing of drowsiness. So your brain becomes more alert. Caffeine also increases the levels of dopamine in your brain, which improves your feeling of well-being and improves your mood. It's this dopamine effect that is the root of caffeine's addictive properties.



## Want to cut down on your caffeine intake?

There are several symptoms of caffeine withdrawal. They include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Extreme fatigue and drowsiness
- Mood swings
- Killer headaches

The best way to deal with caffeine addiction is to slowly back off. In other words, do not go from drinking 5 cups of coffee a day to none; instead, cut back gradually so that you don't shock your system. For those who just crave the taste of coffee like products—go decaf! You can even pour half regular and half decaf in your cup to wean yourself off of the addiction.

## **University of Dayton Dining Services**

**Updated: 2014**

Email Questions to:  
**Joan Bauman MS, RD, LD**  
[jbauman1@udayton.edu](mailto:jbauman1@udayton.edu)



# Caffeine Craze



## Caffeine Content



8oz brewed coffee—135mg  
8oz instant coffee—95mg

8oz black tea—40mg  
8oz green tea—30mg

12oz Coke—40mg  
12oz Mountain Dew—55mg

1 Dark Chocolate Hershey bar—30mg  
1 Milk Chocolate Hershey bar—10mg

No Doz (1 tablet)—200mg  
Excedrin (2 tablets)—130mg



## Watch the Calorie Content of those favorite Coffee Drinks!!

### **IN THE DANGER ZONE:**

Gas Station Fr. Vanilla Cappuccino (20 oz): 360kcal (13g fat, 57g carbs)

Gas Station Fat-Free Fr. Vanilla Cappuccino (20 oz): 200kcal (0g fat, 47.5g carbs)

Starbuck's Java Chip Frappuccino (Grande): 440kcal (18g fat, 69g carbs)

Starbuck's Tazo Green Tea Frappuccino (Grande): 440kcal (16g fat, 70g carbs)

Starbuck's White Hot Chocolate (Grande): 410kcal (12g fat, 61g carbs)

Panera Caramel Latte (11.5oz): 420kcal (18g fat, 53g carbs)

Panera Carmel Ice (16oz): 700kcal (22g fat, 97g carbs)



## It may make you feel energized ...

One of the world's most widely used drugs, caffeine acts as a mild stimulant by increasing heart rate and blood pressure. This is why you feel energized after drinking it. But it sure doesn't keep you that way! Although caffeine often offers a quick pick-me-up, it usually has adverse effects which make you more tired in the long run. The more you rely on caffeine, the more it takes to have an awakening effect on you!



Need to cut back? Try to limit yourself to no more than 200-300 milligrams per day. (That's about 2 cups of coffee). It's best to reduce your intake slowly. You can cut back by mixing decaf with regular coffee, swapping tea for coffee, or by replacing soda with juice.