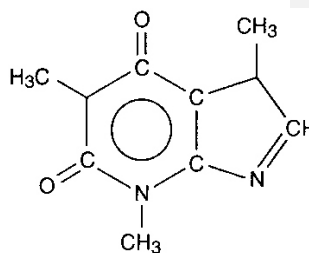


## Caffeine Crave

As a student, you may have turned to caffeine at least once in your university career. Maybe it was to study late for a test or to wake yourself up for an 8 AM class. With finals just around the corner, it's important to keep your health in mind as well as your grades. Read on for some answers to common questions regarding caffeine and your health.



The chemical structure of caffeine

### What is caffeine and where is it found?

Caffeine is a chemical that is found naturally in many plants; mainly coffee beans, cocoa beans and tea leaves. It is naturally occurring in food and drinks such as coffee, chocolate, and tea, but it can also be added to products like soft drinks, energy drinks, and even some medications.



### What are the effects of caffeine?

Caffeine excites the central nervous system and can lead to *short-term improvement of alertness*. This is why people often drink coffee or tea in the morning or when they are studying or working late.

However, sensitivity and tolerance towards caffeine can vary greatly between individuals, so keep in mind that you may be more sensitive to caffeine than your friends or vice versa. Sensitive individuals and individuals who consume too much caffeine may experience *trouble sleeping, irritability, nervousness, anxiety, rapid heart rate, and headaches*.

### Is caffeine safe?

The key to consuming anything in safe amounts is **moderation**. According to current research, moderate caffeine intake *does not pose a risk to healthy individuals*. Along with exercise, eating right, and avoiding smoking, moderation in caffeine intake is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.

### What qualifies as a moderate amount?

Health Canada has made recommendations for maximum daily caffeine intake. Generally, healthy individuals are not at risk of developing adverse effects if they follow these guidelines:

**Women** of childbearing age (**19-50**) should not consume more than **300 mg** of caffeine per day. The level is set lower for women due to an increased risk of possible reproductive effects.

**Men (19-50)** should not consume more than **400 mg** of caffeine per day to avoid possible health effects mentioned above.

**Here are some common drinks and their caffeine content:**

- Venti Starbucks Coffee – 415 mg (exceeds daily recommendation for men and women)
- Grande Starbucks Coffee – 330 mg (exceeds daily recommendation for women)
- 16 oz. café mocha – 175 mg
- 16 oz. café latte or cappuccino – 150 mg
- 8 oz. black tea brewed 3 minutes – 30-80 mg
- Herbal tea – 0 mg
- 5 Hour Energy Shot – 208 mg
- Monster Energy Drink – 160 mg
- Coca Cola, 1 can – 35 mg



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**Looking to cut back your caffeine intake?**

If you consume caffeine on a regular basis, you could experience headaches and drowsiness if you suddenly stop. If you are regularly consuming more than the recommended daily amount, try slowly cutting back rather than cutting caffeine out completely. For example, try a half decaf coffee, or replace a coffee with black tea. Try herbal teas, which are caffeine free, or brew your tea for less time. Remember, moderation is key, but that doesn't mean you have to stop enjoying your coffee in the morning. The important thing is being aware of what you are consuming and listening to your body!

**Resources:**

- Check out the Your Health tab at dietitians.ca
- Use the Health Canada website for articles and reliable information on caffeine and many other health topics
- Visit the UBC Wellness Centre (IKB 183) for peer to peer health and wellness information

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