



# Caffeine and energy drinks

Caffeine is a stimulant drug that comes from a range of plants such as tea, coffee, cacao pod (used to make cocoa and chocolate) and guarana (used in energy bars and energy drinks).

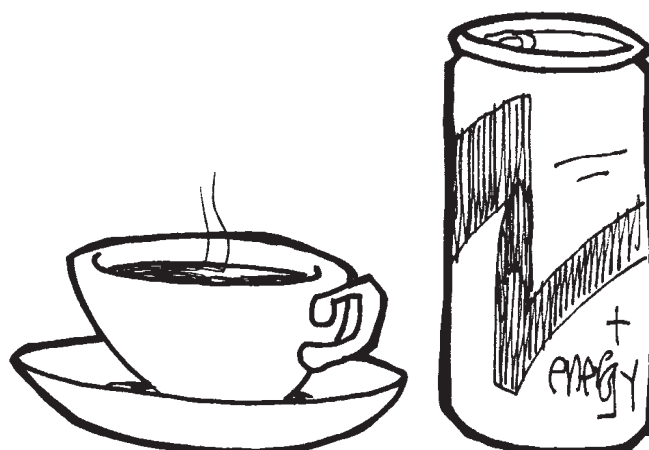
## How much caffeine is your family having?

Drink or product	Size or amount	Caffeine content
Tea	150 ml	30-100 mg
Cocoa or hot chocolate	150 ml	30-60 mg
Coffee – instant	150 ml	60-100 mg
Coffee – percolated	150 ml	100-150 mg
Coffee – decaffeinated	150 ml	2-4 mg
Cola drink like Coke	250 ml	40-50 mg
Diet cola drink like Diet Coke	250 ml	40-50 mg
Diet Coke caffeine free	250 ml	2 mg
Chocolate milk drink like Choc Milk	250 ml	2-7 mg
Energy drink like Red Bull	250 ml	80 mg
Dark chocolate bar	55 g	50 mg
Milk chocolate bar	55 g	3-20 mg

- More than 350 mg of caffeine a day for an adult (about 4 energy drinks or 4 cups of coffee) is enough to cause dependence on this drug.
- A person who is dependent on caffeine is likely to suffer withdrawal symptoms (headaches, fatigue, sweating, muscle pain) within 24 hours of their last dose.

## Some things to think about before giving products containing caffeine to your child

- Caffeine can affect a growing brain so food or drink containing high levels of caffeine, such as energy drinks are not recommended for children under 15 years.
- Children who consume high levels of caffeine (eg through energy drinks) may suffer from increased heart rate, excitability, sleep problems, bed-wetting and anxiety.
- Caffeine is a diuretic (makes us produce more urine) and can quickly cause dehydration, which can lead to overheating and dizziness.
- Energy drinks should not be given to young children after heavy exercise.
- Energy and cola drinks also contain high amounts of sugar (about 5 teaspoons per can) and while some energy drinks claim to include natural vitamins and minerals, these are easily obtained from fresh fruit and vegetables.
- You might like to talk to your child about alternatives to foods that contain caffeine (eg muesli bars, carob bars, flavoured milks, juices, water).



Thank you for playing a vital role in your child's health and drug education.