



The amount of caffeine consumed in beverages varies enormously and is dependent, for example, on the strength of the drink, and the amount consumed. Here is a basic guideline for the average amount of caffeine per serving in popular beverages.

## CAFFEINE – THE FACTS

- Caffeine is found naturally in some 60 plant species of which coffee beans, cocoa beans, kola nuts, and tea leaves are the most well-known. It is also added to some soft drinks, foods and medicines.
- The main effect of caffeine in the body is as a mild stimulant of the central nervous system.
- When taken in moderate amounts, caffeine has mostly positive effects on both mental and physical endurance performance. Science also shows that lifelong caffeine consumption may decrease the risk of neurodegenerative conditions such as age-related cognitive decline, Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease.
- Moderate caffeine consumption through coffee has not been shown to have significant adverse effects on cardiovascular function, nor does it lead to dehydration or significantly affect bone health or gastro-intestinal functions.
- Moderate caffeine consumption, usually 400 mg from all sources, can be enjoyed as part of a healthy, balanced diet and active lifestyle. This corresponds typically to 5 regular-sized cups of coffee per day.
- Intake should be decreased to 200-300mg of caffeine per day from all sources in pregnant women and those who are breastfeeding.
- Caffeine is not a drug of dependence. Brain mapping technology indicates that caffeine is not linked to the brain circuit of dependence. This is supported by the fact that individuals do not develop a tolerance to the stimulant effects of caffeine.
- The American Psychological Association recently recognised Caffeine Withdrawal as a syndrome. Affecting a subset of caffeine users, it is defined as a syndrome resulting from abrupt cessation or reduction in caffeine, following prolonged daily use. The symptoms are short lived and can be avoided altogether if caffeine intake is decreased progressively.