

**Caffeine**

Caffeine is a natural drug that stimulates the body. It can act upon the central nervous system, heart muscle and lungs. It is a diuretic (it makes you produce more urine).

Caffeine tightens the blood vessels and can worsen the effects of migraine type headaches. Caffeine may affect fertility and osteoporosis. For some people caffeine is also an irritant to the bladder.

It has been considered that the average person should not take more than 300mgs of caffeine per day.

The table below shows the amounts per serving in various foods and drinks.

<b>Food/Drink</b>	<b>Caffeine per serving (mgs)</b>
Fresh coffee	<b>80 – 150</b>
Instant coffee	<b>65 – 100</b>
Tea	<b>30 – 70</b>
Instant tea	<b>30</b>
Coca Cola	<b>45.6</b>
Diet Coca Cola	<b>45.6</b>
Pepsi	<b>37.2</b>
Diet Pepsi	<b>37.2</b>
Dr Pepper	<b>39.6</b>
Red Bull	<b>80 mgs per 250mls</b>
Chocolate Bar (1oz)	<b>15</b>
Some cold relief tablets	<b>30</b>
Drinking chocolate	<b>8</b>
<small>(Ref. Website: Frequently asked questions about caffeine)</small>	

Caffeine can be addictive in nature and people can experience withdrawal effects when reducing their caffeine intake. It is therefore vital that someone wishing to reduce their caffeine intake does so by cutting down gradually e.g. by reducing 1 cup per day.

**Alternatives to caffeine drinks:**

- Herbal tea such as peppermint and camomile
- Fruit juices such as apple, elderflower, peach and raspberry

*Please note that hot chocolate, alcohol, lemonade and other fizzy drinks may also cause bladder irritation and blackcurrant is a natural diuretic.*