

Kids and Caffeine

Have you noticed there are many caffeine containing foods and drinks available to both adults and children? Often marketed as *energy boosters*, these foods include soft drinks, mocha and coffee beverages, energy drinks, and “slushee” type drinks.

Why be concerned? Caffeine does not help learning; in fact too much of it can make learning more difficult. Children can become irritable, restless, and have a hard time concentrating.

It is important that caffeine intake in children be limited. Recommendations are:

45 mg for children aged 4-6
62.5 mg for children aged 7-9
85 mg for children aged 10-12



There is no specific caffeine recommendation for teens however, it would be important to limit intake to 400 mg or less per day.

It would be easier to limit caffeine if it was only in certain products like coffee, tea, and some soft drinks. Over the last few years however, grocery and convenience stores have been flooded with a lot products that contain caffeine. Here is a list of the caffeine content of some foods. It may surprise you.

Source of caffeine	Serving size	Caffeine content
Coffee	300 mL (10 oz)	142 - 214
Frozen coffee beverage (Iced cappuccino) (“fast food”– small)	300 mL (10 oz)	70 - 120
Milky coffee beverage (small)	300 mL (10 oz)	58
Iced tea	300 mL (10 oz)	30
Chocolate milk	250 mL (8 oz)	5 - 8
Cola soft drink	355 mL can (12 oz)	36 - 46
Energy drinks	Varies	70 - 170
Energy “slushee” type drinks	300 mL (10 oz)	25

Energy drinks are not recommended for children but are easily available at local convenience stores and in the grocery store.

Keep caffeine in mind when children look for treats. Choose drinks with little or no caffeine or choose smaller servings of drinks that contain caffeine.