

CAFFEINE 101



What Is Caffeine?

Caffeine is a natural stimulant found in coffee, tea, chocolate, energy drinks, and some medications. It works by stimulating the central nervous system, helping you feel more alert and awake.



Recommended Intake

- **General guideline:** Up to 400 mg/day for most healthy adults (approx. 3–4 cups of brewed coffee)
- **Pregnant individuals:** ≤ 200 mg/day
- **Teens:** ≤ 100 mg/day



Common Sources

- Coffee (95 mg per 8 oz)
- Black tea (47 mg per 8 oz)
- Green tea (28 mg per 8 oz)
- Energy drinks (80–200+ mg per serving)
- Soda (30–50 mg per 12 oz)
- Dark chocolate (~20–30 mg per oz)

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Caffeine & Nutrition

- **Hydration matters:** Caffeine can be mildly dehydrating – pair with water
- **Balance with food:** Consuming caffeine on an empty stomach may cause nausea or anxiety
- **Watch added sugars:** Many caffeinated drinks (like energy drinks and flavored lattes) contain large amounts of sugar
- **Bone health:** Excessive caffeine may slightly reduce calcium absorption – balance with calcium-rich foods
- **Iron absorption:** Caffeine can interfere with iron absorption from plant foods – separate caffeine from meals high in iron



Tips for Healthy Consumption

- Don't rely on caffeine as a substitute for sleep or proper nutrition
- Cut off caffeine 6–8 hours before bedtime to protect sleep quality
- Start your day with water before your morning coffee
- Try lower-caffeine options like green tea or half-caff coffee if you're sensitive
- Avoid “caffeine stacking” (e.g., combining coffee + energy drinks)