

Caffeine Count Sheet

Read the label. Count every can. Protect your sleep.

Informational only, not medical advice.



Parent to parent: you do not need to be a scientist to keep caffeine in a healthy range. The amount that is okay depends on age, and the simplest habit is to read the label and count every can, coffee, soda, and pre workout too.¹

HOW MUCH IS OK AT EVERY AGE

Daily caffeine guide by age

- ☐ **Most healthy adults: about 400 mg a day.** The FDA cites this as an amount not generally linked to negative effects. That is roughly two to three 12 oz cups of coffee.¹
- ☐ **Pregnant or breastfeeding: 300 mg or 200 mg a day.** Health Canada suggests no more than 300 mg a day.³ Europe's food safety agency, EFSA, uses 200 mg.⁴
- ☐ **Kids and teens: 2.5 to 3 mg per kg of body weight.** Health Canada suggests no more than 2.5 mg per kg.³ EFSA uses about 3 mg per kg.⁴ *Example:* for a 100 pound child, 2.5 mg per kg is about 113 mg.
- ☐ **Energy drinks and kids: best skipped.** The American Academy of Pediatrics says the stimulants in energy drinks have no place in the diet of children and adolescents.²
- ☐ **Give sleep a 6 hour head start.** In a sleep study, 400 mg of caffeine taken 6 hours before bed still disrupted sleep.⁹ A caffeine cutoff time can help.

When caffeine is too much

Short term signs. The FDA lists a faster heart rate, palpitations, higher blood pressure, jitteriness, trouble sleeping, an upset stomach, and dehydration in kids and teens who get too much.¹

Heart rhythm. The NIH notes that large amounts of caffeine may cause heart rhythm problems, and that caffeine may harm a child's still developing heart and nervous system.⁵

ER visits. Energy drink related emergency visits doubled between 2007 and 2011. In 2011, 1 in 10 of those visits ended in a hospital stay.⁵

Red flags: when to get help

Chest pain, fainting, a seizure, or a racing heart that won't slow down? **Call 911.** (Dr. Jocko's ER guidance)

What Is in That Can?

A calm walk through the label, plus energy without the can.

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INGREDIENT GUIDE

Caffeine. The main engine: 70 to 240 mg in a 16 oz energy drink.⁵

Guarana. Sounds like a fruit, but this plant contains caffeine, so it raises the total.⁵

Sugar or sweeteners. One 16 oz can may hold 54 to 62 g of added sugar, more than a full day's recommended max. Sugar free versions use sweeteners instead.⁵

Taurine. EFSA found the amounts usually in these drinks did not change the safety of single caffeine doses up to 200 mg.⁴

B vitamins (niacin). Very high doses of niacin can cause skin flushing.⁸

Ginseng. Trouble sleeping is its most common side effect, and it may interact with some medicines.⁶

L carnitine. Around 3 g a day has been linked to nausea, cramps, and diarrhea.⁷

If your child takes any medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist before adding these.

ENERGY WITHOUT THE CAN

- ☐ **Sleep first.** The CDC recommends 8 to 10 hours of sleep for teens and 7 or more for adults.¹¹ Often the real fix is sleep, not another can.
- ☐ **Water as the main drink.** The Dietary Guidelines, cited by the FDA, say drinks with no added sugar, like water and milk, should be the main choice for kids and teens.¹
- ☐ **Tooth enamel.** In a 2021 lab study, every energy drink tested was erosive to tooth enamel.¹⁰
- ☐ **Notice the dip.** Many people feel a slump as caffeine wears off and reach for another can. That cycle is worth noticing.
- ☐ **Skip mixing with alcohol.** The NIH says caffeine can make people feel less drunk while reaction time stays just as impaired. Drinkers 15 to 23 who mix them are 4 times more likely to binge at high intensity (CDC, via NIH). In 2011, 42 percent of energy drink ER visits involved alcohol or drugs.⁵

Sources (each confirmed Oct 20, 2026; titles are clickable links)

1. FDA. [Spilling the Beans: How Much Caffeine Is Too Much?](#)

2. AAP. [Sports Drinks and Energy Drinks for Children and Adolescents.](#) Pediatrics 2011 (PMID 21624882)

3. Health Canada. [Caffeine in Foods](#)

4. EFSA. [Caffeine topic page](#)

5. NIH NCCIH. [Energy Drinks](#)

6. NIH NCCIH. [Asian Ginseng](#)

7. NIH ODS. [Carnitine fact sheet](#)

8. NIH ODS. [Niacin fact sheet](#)

9. Drake et al. [Caffeine effects on sleep taken 0, 3, or 6 hours before going to bed.](#) J Clin Sleep Med 2013

10. Silva et al. [Influence of energy drinks on enamel erosion.](#) J Clin Exp Dent 2021. doi 10.4317/iced.57788 (PMID 34824692)

11. CDC. [About Sleep](#)

Call 911 line: Dr. Jocko's ER guidance.