DR. JOCKO, ER PHYSICIAN

Caffeine Count Sheet

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

Educational 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)*

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What Is in That Can?

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

Educational only, not medical advice.



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)

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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/jced.57788 (PMID 34824692)
11. CDC, About Sleep

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

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drzifferblatt.com/caffeine

Let's Start Your Journey

Dr. Jocko