

Caffeine

Caffeine is a mildly addictive stimulant drug that stimulates the central nervous system and can cause side effects such as: irritability and restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and an increased need to urinate.

Caffeine occurs naturally in some drinks, (coffee, tea and hot chocolate) and is added to others (cola and energy drinks).

Nutrition labels rarely include the amount of caffeine contained in a food product.

Some of the ingredients indicating the presence of caffeine in a food or drink include: coffee or coffee beans, green or black tea leaves, guarana, yerba/yerba mate, and cocoa beans.

Health professionals suggest that children aged 7 - 12 get no more than 65 - 85 mg of caffeine each day, as even low levels of caffeine can affect most childrens' behaviour. Withdrawal symptoms may be felt by children consuming even small amounts of caffeine. Symptoms might include headaches, irritability and restlessness.

References

Health Canada, *Caffeine in Food*, February 2012

