

Caffeine — Not a Good Choice for Kids

According to a parent study, many kids between the ages of 5 to 12 consume caffeine every day. Kids ages 5 – 7 took in about 52 mg. of caffeine daily. Kids ages 8 – 12 took in almost 109 mg. daily.

The U.S. has no specific caffeine guidelines for kids. However, Canada tells parents to limit caffeine intake to no more than 2.5 mg. per 2.2 pounds of body weight. Based on average weights, this would be:

- 45 mg. for kids 4 – 6
- 62.5 mg for kids 7 – 9
- 85 mg. for kids 8 – 12.

Your child could weigh more or less than the average.

Caffeine is a drug that can have negative effects in the body. It speeds up the brain and the nervous system. It also acts as a diuretic and causes extra fluid loss.

Effects of caffeine depend on body weight. A smaller weight child has a greater risk for side effects. These side effects can last up to 6 hours.

Caffeine is present in soda, coffee, tea, chocolate, energy drinks and some over-the-counter drugs. Most kids, however, get caffeine from soda.

It is wise to keep caffeine out of your child's diet.

- Do not allow your child to drink soda daily.
- Read labels. Look for caffeine in soda, other drinks, candy and medication.
- Serve water, milk or diluted juice at meals.
- Carry a BPH-free water bottle instead of stopping to buy drinks.

Side effects from caffeine may include:

- Headaches,
- Irritability, nervousness, jitteriness,
- Increased heart rate,
- Increased blood pressure,
- Short attention span,
- Problems with concentration,
- Muscle tremors, and
- Decreased appetite.



*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital
to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

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