"I drink a lot of coffee. Should I be worried about too much caffeine?"

Caffeine can be part of a healthy diet for most people, but too much caffeine can be dangerous to your health. Depending on things like your weight, medications you take, and your sensitivity, what is consider "too much" can be different for different people.

What is caffeine?

Caffeine is a natural stimulant. Its main effect is on the central nervous system, where it can increase alertness and provide a needed boost when you are tired. But how people react to caffeine varies depending on their sensitivity and how quickly it is digested. Caffeine reaches its peak level in the body within one hour of eating or drinking it and people may continue to feel its effects for four to six hours.

Most people get caffeine from drinks and the amount of caffeine in drinks can vary a lot. Common caffeinated drinks include:

- An 8-ounce cup of coffee: 95-200 mg
- A 12-ounce can of cola: 35-45 mg
- An 8-ounce energy drink: 70-100 mg
- An 8-ounce cup of tea: 14-60 mg

What are possible health problems caused by too much caffeine?

- Restlessness and shakiness
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Rapid or abnormal heart rhythm
- Dehydration
- Anxiety
- Dependency, so you need to take more of it to get the same results

For healthy adults, the FDA recommends no more than 400 miligrams (mg) of caffeine a day.

What can make people more sensitive to caffeine's effects?

You should check with your health care provider about whether you should limit or avoid caffeine if you:

- Are pregnant or breastfeeding since a small amount of caffeine can pass to your baby
- Have sleep disorders
- Have migraines or other chronic headaches
- Have anxiety
- Have GERD or ulcers
- Have fast or irregular heart rhythms
- Have high blood pressure
- Take certain medicines or supplements. There might be interactions between caffeine and medicines and supplements.
- Are a child or teen. The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages the consumption of caffeine by children and adolescents.

fallonhealth