

## Caffeine Fact Sheet

### Description/Overview

Many people don't realize caffeine is a drug. It is one of the most prevalently used drugs in the world

- Caffeine is a stimulant
- It can be found in pain relievers and cold medications; also in foods and beverages
- Found in coffee beans, kola nuts, tea leaves and cocoa leaves
- Commonly used products containing caffeine:
  - Chocolate (milk or dark)
  - Tea /Coffee
  - Cocoa leaves and Kola nuts
  - Cola drinks
  - Stimulants/ Painkillers and some medications (Tylenol 1, Dristan, Anacin, Excedrin)

### Short – Term Effects

- Postpones drowsiness, increases alertness, elevates the mood mildly and increases sensory awareness
- Can increase metabolic rate and body temperature, stimulate respiration and cardiac muscles,
- Decrease appetite, shorten sleep and constrict cerebral blood vessels
- Increase in urination and blood pressure
- Larger amounts of caffeine can cause a person to experience a rapid, irregular heartbeat, tremors and insomnia; may feel irritable, nervous and restless
- Nervousness and anxiety can be triggered by large amounts

### Long - Term Effects

Heavy use (more than 3 cups daily) could potentially cause:

- Stomach upset, and irritation of the gastrointestinal system,
- Lasting insomnia, constant anxiety and/or depression
- Rapid irregular heartbeat
- Potential to affect calcium balance in the body, which increases the risk of osteoporosis and reduces bone density

### Dependence Potential

- There is a risk of developing *tolerance* (needing more to get the same effect)

### Withdrawal

If caffeine use is stopped abruptly, withdrawal symptoms may include:

- Feeling depressed, irritable and tired,
- Headaches and insomnia
- Symptoms can begin anywhere from 12 to 24 hours after stop using caffeine
- Symptoms do not usually last longer than a few days