

# Food Facts Fancies

## Are You Really “Addicted” To Caffeine?

(NAPSA)—There’s a lot of misinformation brewing about caffeine, particularly when it comes to effects from consuming too many energy drinks or other caffeinated beverages.

Some people claim they are “addicted” to caffeine, but experts say caffeine is not an addictive substance.

According to Herbert Muncie, M.D., professor of family medicine at Louisiana State University, “The World Health Organization (WHO) says there is no evidence that caffeine has even remotely comparable physical or social consequences as those of serious drugs of abuse.”

Depending on the amount ingested, caffeine can be a mild stimulant to the central nervous system. And although caffeine is sometimes casually referred to as “addictive,” moderate caffeine consumption is safe and should not be classified with addictive drugs of abuse. Someone saying they are “addicted” to caffeine is like saying they are “addicted” to running, working or television—it is not a true addiction that involves compulsive and irrational behavior.

While some people complain of headaches and drowsiness if they stop consuming caffeine, these symptoms are usually mild and subside in a day or two. For those wishing to reduce or phase caffeine out of their diet, symptoms can be reduced or prevented by gradually reducing caffeine consumption over time.

Caffeine can be safely consumed in moderation. Most experts agree that moderate caffeine consumption for the general healthy population is around 300 milligrams per day, or about three 8-ounce cups of coffee. This



**Some people claim they are “addicted” to energy drinks and other caffeine-containing beverages, but experts say caffeine is not really addictive.**

amount includes caffeine from all sources: beverages such as coffee, tea, soda and energy drinks; as well as dietary supplements, medications, and caffeine-containing food products such as chewing gum and candy. While caffeine content is not required to be labeled, it’s always a good idea to check the label or product Web site for this information.

Some people may experience effects from consuming caffeine at lower levels than others. However, regular consumers of caffeine can develop a tolerance to these effects. Certain sensitive sub-populations, such as children, pregnant women, and those with a history of heart attack and/or high blood pressure should monitor their caffeine intake and talk to their health care provider about their caffeine consumption.

For more information, visit the International Food Information Council Foundation Web site at [www.foodinsight.org](http://www.foodinsight.org) and search for “caffeine.”