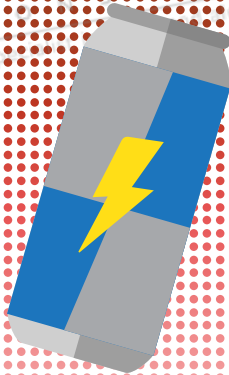


CAFFEINE



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WHAT IS CAFFEINE?

Caffeine comes from coffee shrubs, tea plants and cocoa beans that are grown all around the world. It can also be produced artificially and added to certain foods and drinks. Most people associate caffeine with coffee but it can also be found in energy drinks (like Redbull), tea, some fizzy drinks and even chocolate! It also is sometimes found in over the counter drugs like pain relief medication.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS AND RISKS?

Caffeine is a stimulant drug meaning that it gives you more energy, increases your heart rate and makes you temporary more alert. Having lots of caffeine like drinking an energy drink can cause anxiety, dizziness, headaches, interfere with sleeping and disrupt concentration and behaviour. So if you are stressed or anxious, caffeine can make these feelings worse. Caffeine increases your heart rate as does stress and anxiety so it's a bad combination! Many people develop a tolerance for caffeine which means that their body gets used to having it every day. Over time, they will increase their caffeine intake to feel alert and concentrate better. But caffeine is addictive. Ask anyone who drinks coffee every day. If they tried to give it up, they would experience withdrawal symptoms like headaches and tiredness.

TIPS ON CUTTING DOWN?

-  Try decaffeinated coffee and tea instead
-  If you drink coffee switch to tea or green tea which has less caffeine in it
-  Slowly cut down your intake to minimise the withdrawal symptoms
-  Try different drinks like making your own flavoured water with infused mixed fruit or try fruit teas
-  Double check any over the counter medications so they don't include caffeine