

Caffeine:

Caffeine is a drug, a mild stimulant to the central nervous system, which is most often used to improve alertness, muscle coordination, decrease fatigue, and increase effectiveness of certain pain relievers. Caffeine is most often found in soda, coffee, tea, chocolate, energy drinks, prescription and nonprescription drugs.

It is wise to consume caffeine moderately (defined as 300 mg or about 3 cups of coffee per day). Some people are sensitive to caffeine and its stimulating effect, resulting in anxiety, abdominal pain, elevated blood pressure, breathing and heart rate, and muscle twitching. Using pills vs. beverages to achieve your caffeine high can be dangerous as one can exceed the recommended daily amount and suffer dehydration and other negative effects.

While caffeine is not addictive, it is highly habit-forming. Stopping your use abruptly may lead to caffeine withdrawal, which can include the following symptoms: headache, irritability, anxiety/depression, and fatigue. Remember that caffeine will keep you awake so that you can study or be with friends, but your body is deprived of rest during this time. Try other ways to re-energize your body such as taking a brisk 10 minute walk, eating regular, healthful meals (fatty food and alcohol can make you feel tired), and getting a good night's rest.

Caffeine Calculator - <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/caffeine.html>

References

www.webmd.com

“Caffeine”, McKinley Health Center, www.mckinley.uiuc.edu

“How Caffeine works”, www.howstuffworks.com/caffeine