



West Virginia Poison Center

Press Release

West Virginia University-Charleston Division

Charleston, WV

For Immediate Release

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Is Caffeine Safe for Your Child?

The West Virginia Poison Center Warns About Caffeine Use for Children and Teens

CHARLESTON, WV – Does your teen take caffeine supplements to stay up late studying for a test? Do your children consume energy drinks before a sports game or other after school activities? Although moderate caffeine use is generally safe for adults, it is best for children and teens to avoid large amounts of caffeine.

Caffeine is a stimulant that can be found in a number of products, including coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy drinks, energy supplements, and food. Caffeine is used to help make a person more alert and increase their energy. However, consuming too much caffeine could cause: nausea, nervousness, restlessness, increased blood pressure, abnormal heart beat, and seizures.

Over recent years, caffeine use has grown in popularity with children and teens. The West Virginia Poison Center recommends monitoring children and teen's use of caffeine. Use of more than one type of caffeinated product in the same day or use of more than a single serving at a time is especially dangerous.

Energy drinks—Energy drinks contain high amounts of sugar, caffeine and other ingredients, which may naturally contain caffeine. Since energy drinks are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), there is no limit on the amount of caffeine used in them.

Energy foods—A growing trend is for companies to add caffeine to everyday products. Caffeine can now be found in products such as gum, lip balm, candy, snack food, and energy bars.

Pure caffeine products—Pure caffeine products can be found in tablet, liquid or powder form available for purchase without a prescription at stores, gas stations, and over the Internet. Tablet caffeine products are typically consumed by themselves. Liquid and powder caffeine products are sold in bulk with instructions to measure out a serving and add to drinks such as water, juice, or soda. As the caffeine in these products is concentrated, a serving can be a small amount of liquid or powder. This makes it very easy to exceed the single serving size recommended. It also makes it easy for children and teens to carry these products in their pocket, purse, or backpack. Deaths and serious injury have been reported.

Energy or weight loss supplements—These products may be overlooked as a product containing caffeine and they are consumed by teenagers. In addition, it is not always easy to determine if caffeine is present as the label may simply list the plant source of the caffeine without specifically listing caffeine as an ingredient.

Poisoned? Not sure?—Call the medical experts at the West Virginia Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. For additional caffeine information, please view our “Energy Enhancers” brochure on our website at <http://www.wvpoisoncenter.org>.

About the West Virginia Poison Center:

The West Virginia Poison Center provides comprehensive emergency poison information, prevention and educational resources to West Virginians 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The WVPC is staffed by nurses, pharmacists and physicians with special training in treatment of poisonings. Located in Charleston, WV, the WVPC is a part of the West Virginia University-Charleston Division. Toll-free: 1-800-222-1222. Website: www.wvpoisoncenter.org.

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