

Research Roundup

FDA Investigates Safety of Caffeine in Food

There is a new craze hitting the grocery stores—adding caffeine to food. Some examples of these caffeine infused foods are Kraft’s MiO “water enhancer,” The Jelly Belly Candy Company’s “Extreme Sport Beans,” and Frito Lay’s “Cracker Jack’D Power Bites.” The concern, especially for adolescents, is the expanding range of products that contain caffeine and the possibility of consuming multiple caffeinated foods throughout the day. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that it plans to investigate the safety of caffeine in food, focusing on the effects of caffeine on adolescents.

Roger Sullivan, founder of Wired Wyatt’s, a company that makes caffeinated maple syrup and waffles, believes caffeinated snacks are becoming so popular because, “[People] are busy with jobs...family...trying to get ahead or even [staying] afloat in this economy...and the first thing we sacrifice is our sleep.” Sullivan made it clear he believes consumers need to be educated on the amount of caffeine in each product and how that compares to their usual cup of coffee. He also noted the presence of a warning label on his product, stating that the product is, “Not intended for pregnant or nursing mothers, children or persons sensitive to caffeine.”



Currently, manufacturers are required to list caffeine as an ingredient, but not required to list the amount in the product. Michael Taylor, the deputy commissioner for foods and veterinary medicine at the FDA, states, “Our concern is about caffeine appearing in a range of new products, including ones that may be attractive and readily available to children and adolescents, without careful consideration of their cumulative impact.” Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) remind everyone that, “Young people are not small adults. Therefore determinations on the safety of caffeine should not be based solely on healthy adults.”

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Taylor believes the first step in dealing with the issue is to, “Better understand caffeine consumption” in order to determine a safe level for total consumption. While the FDA has not provided an acceptable amount of caffeine for children, the American Academy of Pediatrics encourages children to consume no caffeine. Taylor also mentions the necessity for a decision about which products are acceptable for the addition of caffeine and which are not, determined partially by the product’s appeal to children.

For now, consumers need to be aware of the possible addition of caffeine into their foods and keep track of how much caffeine they consume. It is suggested that consumers minimize their caffeinated food intake until the FDA has a more definitive idea of the side effects.

Your Caffeine Guide:

The FDA suggests that 400 mg caffeine/day for healthy **adults** is generally not associated with dangerous or negative effects.

16 oz. Starbucks Brewed Coffee	330 mg
16 oz. Starbucks Flavored Latte	150 mg
1 Squeeze MiO Energy	60 mg
1 (2.5 oz) Wired Flavored Waffle	200 mg
1 oz. Extreme Sport Beans	50 mg

