



DRINK SENSE

The Facts About Alcohol & Caffeine

**Drinks that contain both
caffeine and alcohol come
in two forms:**

pre-mixed by manufacturers
sold at liquor marts, and
hand-mixed combinations
of alcohol and non-alcoholic
caffeinated drinks like
coffee or energy drinks.



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Pre-mixed vs. Hand Mixed

Labels on pre-mixed drinks show how much alcohol and caffeine are in them, giving you control over how much you drink. Pre-mixed drinks may contain natural ingredients that contain caffeine, like guarana and yerba mate. However, hand-mixed drinks can carry a higher risk because they typically contain more caffeine or alcohol than pre-mixed, regulated drinks. When mixing drinks, be mindful of the caffeine and alcohol content in every ingredient. To play it safe, stick to 400 mg or less of caffeine each day, and two alcoholic drinks each week for low risk of harm.

What happens when you combine alcohol and caffeine?

If you're consuming alcohol and caffeine together, it's important to remember that one doesn't cancel out the other. If you've had some alcohol, caffeine might make you feel more alert, but the effects of the alcohol are still there. The main risk of mixing alcohol and caffeine is consuming too much of one or the other. Therefore, good practice is to stay within the same limits you would set for yourself for alcohol and for caffeine and to know how much of each is in what you're consuming. Not all caffeinated drinks have the same amount of caffeine. While a small (8 oz) cup of brewed coffee will have an average of 135 mg of caffeine, other caffeinated drinks (like home-brewed coffee or concentrated energy shots) may have higher amounts by volume.

Reducing Your Risk

There are things you can do to limit your risk while drinking:

- Limit consumption of hand-mixed drinks with alcohol and caffeine
- Follow Health Canada's guidelines for safe caffeine consumption and do not exceed 400 mg in one day. [View guidelines here](#)
- Eat before and while drinking
- Have water or other non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic drinks in between alcoholic drinks
- Consider your age, body weight and health conditions (including prescription medications) that might suggest lower limits
- Track how much you drink and pay attention to labels
- Follow Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health and consider limiting alcohol intake to no more than two standard drinks per week. [View guidance here](#)

Effects on Your Body

The effects of drinking too much alcohol are well known: a dreaded hangover could include headaches, exhaustion, vomiting and more. When combined with excessive caffeine intake, it can lead to even more unwanted effects, like:

- Increased dehydration
- High heart rate or heart palpitations
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)