

## A Dangerous Drug Trend – Powdered Caffeine

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For most adults and adolescents in the U.S., caffeine is a part of everyday life. While we tend to associate caffeine with certain beverages, it is also commonly found in many of our foods and medicines as well.

Most of us, however, do not think of caffeine as being a drug, and certainly not a dangerous drug, until now.

Meet powdered caffeine.

That's right, caffeine now comes in powdered form.

This product, unregulated by the FDA, is a soft, white, powdery substance, touted as being an instant pick-me-up that can be sprinkled onto any food or mixed into any liquid. While you're not likely to see it on store shelves, it's all the buzz online, as well as easy and cheap to order (even cheaper if you buy in bulk). One site sells 100 grams of "pure powder" for under \$12.

For some perspective, the average cup of coffee contains about 100 mg of caffeine. The typical single serving of powdered caffeine is equal to about two cups of coffee. The powder is so potent however, that one serving is a mere 1/16 teaspoon.

Consider how easily a person may mistakenly or unknowingly scoop a full teaspoon. This would be equivalent to around 30 cups of coffee. If you've ever had one cup of coffee too many and felt jittery or had a slight headache, can you imagine how your body might respond to 30 cups?

Caffeine is a stimulant drug with the potential to harm. It impacts the body and brain and changes the way we feel and behave. While the majority of people use caffeine to temporarily feel more awake and alert, this drug has the ability to produce detrimental and even deadly side effects.

Caffeine use can lead to: increased heart rate, uneven heart rhythm, headaches, dizziness, nausea, dehydration, anxiety/depression, difficulty sleeping, tremors and seizures.

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Though rare, cases of fatalities have been reported due to caffeine overdose, including an Ohio teen who recently died after an unintentional overdose of powdered caffeine, just prior to his high school graduation. According to autopsy reports, the 18-year-old suffered a cardiac arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) and a seizure.

Health experts say powdered caffeine very rapidly absorbs into the bloodstream and some fear fatalities may increase, especially among adolescents who underestimate the potency of the powder.

With powdered caffeine on the market, it may be more important than ever to have a conversation with your children about the potential dangers of the drug and in particular, products like powdered caffeine; reminding them that just because a substance is legal and its use is socially acceptable, doesn't mean it is completely safe.

Like so many things in life, doctors say moderation is key when it comes to caffeine intake. That means different things to different people depending on age, size, sex, health and how sensitive a person is to caffeine. On average, moderate use for adults means somewhere between 100 – 300 mg of caffeine each day, while teens are recommended to consume no more than 100 mg daily, younger children should get even less.

If your caffeine intake or that of your child's exceeds the recommended amount, take charge of your health by reducing caffeine in your diet, and helping your child do the same. Be sure to cut back slowly however, to avoid withdrawal symptoms (headaches, irritability, nausea, etc.).

*Source: Drug Free Action Alliance*