



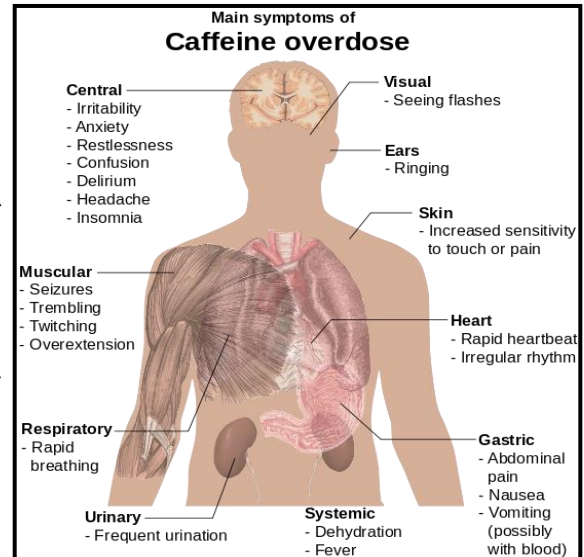
## Stopping the Caffeine Addiction

Caffeine is a substance found in certain plants that acts as a stimulant for your body. It is not absorbed into the bloodstream; it goes straight into the brain, stimulating certain neurotransmitters that increase alertness and awareness. Most people use caffeine as a way to stay energized throughout the entire day and relieve fatigue and drowsiness.

While a little bit of caffeine helps increase alertness, focus, and productivity, most people consume too much caffeine on a regular basis. This can lead to anxiety, depression, restlessness, and nausea, among a host of other side effects. Excess caffeine consumption is especially bad for people with heart issues, as the caffeine overworks the heart. In the case of patients with atrial fibrillation (AF), too much caffeine could exacerbate the arrhythmia's symptoms, leading to a higher risk of fainting, stroke, or even heart failure.

### So I just need to avoid sodas and coffee, right?

There are a lot of feasible alternatives to many of these substances that boost energy and keep the heart healthy



while keeping caffeine levels low.

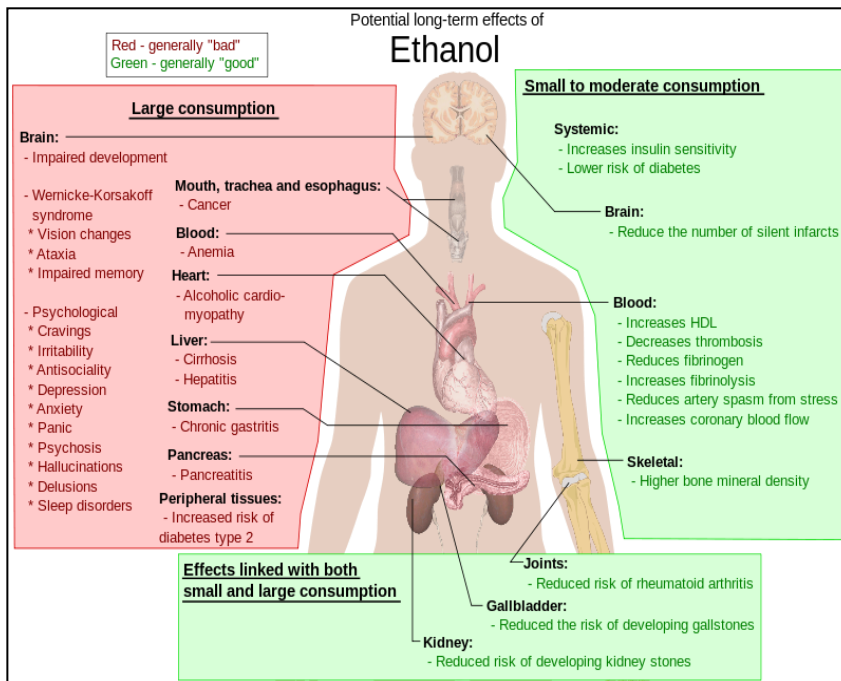
### Here's a list of the most common foods and drinks with a significant amount of caffeine in them.

- **Coffee**
- **Non-cola sodas (Mountain Dew, Sunkist's, etc.)**
- **Some flavors of ice cream**
- **Weight-loss pills**
- **Alcoholic Drinks**
- **Breath fresheners**
- **Energy drinks (Red Bull, Monster, etc.)**
- **Excedrin migraine relief tablets**
- **Dark chocolate (Hershey's Special Dark chocolate bar has as much caffeine as a can of Coca-Cola)**
- **Green tea** contains much less caffeine than regular tea or coffee. It also has a lot of natural antioxidants, making it useful in cancer prevention.
- **Milk chocolate** does not have as much caffeine as dark chocolate does.
- **Aerobic exercise**, such as jogging or swimming, keeps your body fit and active, providing long-term alertness and focus.
- **Ginseng** works as a stimulant, increasing blood flow and reducing depression and stress.
- **Herbal coffee** is another caffeine-free coffee taste-alike that uses roasted herbs to make a rich flavor.
- **Fruits**, especially apples; grapes; and oranges, are high in fructose, which is a natural stimulant.
- **Decaffeinated coffee** has a substantially lower amount of caffeine, but it is not caffeine free.
- **Iced tea** is low on calories and provides good taste. If you need more sweetness, switch to an artificial sweetener



# Stopping the Alcohol Addiction

At first, you might only drink on the weekend or at special events, rarely leading to excess consumption. But, you may find yourself drinking more and more, several days a week in fact, to a point where you cannot stop drinking because your body might go into withdrawal. Your body now physically needs the alcohol in order to function properly, even though the alcohol is hurting you. At this point, you have become alcohol dependent, a condition that is detrimental to your physical, mental, and emotional health.



While moderate alcohol usage (< 2 drinks/day) is beneficial towards cardiovascular health, this amount can also be lower for many individuals. Excess alcohol is especially harmful in AF patients, potentially leading to serious health complications, including:

- ❖ Heart problems
- ❖ High blood pressure
- ❖ Stroke
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Osteoporosis
- ❖ Cirrhosis
- ❖ Pancreatitis
- ❖ Death

**All in all, stop drinking alcohol when you are known to have Afib**

## Stopping the Addiction

Withdrawal symptoms can be life-threatening and if you are trying to stop alcohol addiction, you must have a plan of action. In most cases, withdrawal symptoms will prevent a person from quitting alcohol immediately. Detoxification, or detox, is a short regimen of medication to decrease the effects of withdrawal symptoms, making it easier to ease off drinking. You need to rely on a combination of treatment, medication, therapy, and exercise in order to limit alcohol dependence. Work with your doctor on establishing an effective treatment plan.

✚ **Healthy Lifestyle:** Keeping to a healthy and active lifestyle is important in recovering from an alcohol addiction. Both eating healthy and regular exercise promote endorphin release that improves a person's mood and can replace the need for alcohol. Yoga and meditation also improve quality of life by reducing overall stress, while also providing long term benefits in comparison to alcohol.

✚ **Medication**

✚ **Counseling and Support Groups**