

## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### 1 teaspoon of caffeine powder equals 25 cups of coffee

Teenagers looking to increase their energy levels sometimes turn to powdered pure caffeine for a boost, but doing so can be deadly, experts say.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently warned consumers about the dangers of the powder, and some members of Congress want to ban it. The FDA said at least two deaths are linked to the stimulant — an 18-year-old from Ohio and a 24-year-old from Georgia.



“Pure caffeine is a powerful stimulant, and very small amounts may cause accidental overdose,” the FDA said in its warning.

In its pure form, a single teaspoon of the caffeine powder has about the same amount of caffeine as 25 cups of coffee, according to the FDA. The serving size recommended by manufacturers is too small to be measured accurately with common kitchen tools.

Marcie Beth Schneider, M.D., FAAP, a member of the Section on Adolescent Health of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said teenagers may want to try caffeine powder thinking it will improve their sports performance or help them stay awake after getting little sleep.

The stimulant also is easy to get online and can be purchased in large quantities at little cost.

Caffeine is absorbed by all tissues in the body and can cause increases in heart rate, blood pressure, rate of speech, attentiveness, anxiety, stomach secretion and temperature, Dr. Schneider said.

Those who overdose can experience erratic heartbeat, seizures, vomiting, diarrhea, stupor and death, according to the FDA.

Dr. Schneider recommends that parents learn about the dangers of powdered caffeine and talk with their children about it just as they do other dangerous substances like alcohol and tobacco.

“This is another topic to say I really need you to think before you do this,” she said.

The FDA recommends anyone having a negative reaction to caffeine seek immediate medical care. Anyone with such an experience also is asked to report it to the FDA at 240-402-2405 or [caers@cfsan.fda.gov](mailto:caers@cfsan.fda.gov).

To read the FDA safety alert, visit [1.usa.gov/1yQuXpk](http://1.usa.gov/1yQuXpk).

— *Melissa Jenco*

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