



To: Physicians, Nurses, and Other Health Care Providers in the Federated States of Micronesia
From: Ron Kirschner, MD
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Subject: Caffeine Powder
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- Most caffeine is consumed in the form of coffee, energy drinks, weight-loss products, pills, or capsules.
- In May, 2014 an Ohio teenager died after ingesting pure powdered caffeine.
- A teaspoon of pure caffeine contains as much as about 25 cups of coffee.
 - Pure caffeine is available through the internet and might not come with clear warnings or dosing instructions so a seemingly small amount can be dangerous.
- Caffeine is rapidly absorbed from the GI tract
- Clinical effects include tachycardia, nausea/vomiting, headache, anxiety and tremor.
 - Severe toxicity is characterized by seizures, tachydysrhythmias, wide pulse pressure, and hypotension.
- Activated charcoal can remove caffeine through 'intestinal dialysis' even in cases of delayed presentation, provided the patient can protect the airway and bowel sounds are present.
- Management of caffeine toxicity should include IV fluids, anti-emetics, benzodiazepines as needed for tremor, anxiety or seizures, and cautious use of beta blockers.
- Hemodialysis and multi-dose activated charcoal have been used to enhance caffeine elimination in cases of severe toxicity.

References

FDA, Consumer advice on powdered pure caffeine,

<http://www.fda.gov/food/recallsoutbreaksemergencies/safetyalertsadvisories/ucm405787.htm> accessed 7/25/14

Jabbar, Fatal caffeine overdose. *Am J Forensic Med Pathol* 2013; 34: 3211.



Our trained staff of nurse specialists in poison information and physician toxicologists is available 24 hours a day to answer your questions. In the Federated States of Micronesia, health care professionals and the public can reach the Poison Center by calling 288, wait for an automated operator, then 888-222-4516.