



## Caffeine Buzzes Boys More Than Girls, Study Finds

### As kids consume more quantities of caffeine, the finding assesses who is most vulnerable -- and how.

By [Cristen Conger](#) | Mon Jan 11, 2010 07:09 AM ET

Caffeine has a stronger effect on boys than on girls, finds a new study that zeros in on the drug's health impacts on adolescents.

More kids are consuming more and more caffeinated drinks, but the stimulant's effects on their growing bodies are still largely unknown.

The study, which was published in *Behavioural Pharmacology*, looked at how consuming caffeinated beverages affected children between 12 and 17 years old. It found that boys would work significantly longer at a computer game to win a caffeinated soda than girls would.

The study also controlled for factors including regular [caffeine](#) consumption, thirst and boredom.

Jennifer R. Temple, lead researcher and neurobiologist at University of Buffalo, said she expected [caffeinated drinks](#) to work most strongly on those in the study who routinely consumed the most caffeine, regardless of sex. Instead, the results revealed a relationship between gender and the desire for caffeinated soda.

"We aren't sure (why boys responded more), but we speculate that it could have to do with circulating hormones and their effect on the metabolism of caffeine," Temple said.

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- [Coffee Could Fuel You and Your Car](#)
- [Can Caffeine Trigger Migraines?](#)
- [HowStuffWorks.com: Why Does Caffeine Keep You Awake?](#)
- [HowStuffWorks.com: Caffeine](#)



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As youth caffeine consumption has steadily increased, researchers have started studying the drug's health impacts in adolescents more closely.

"A lot of children and teenagers may be cycling between periods of (caffeine) use and non-use, with some [unintended consequences](#) that might affect things [like sleep](#), academic performance or emotions," said Aaron Luebbe, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Mississippi Medical Center who has studied the interaction of caffeine use and depressive symptoms among fifth- and 10th-grade students.

Preliminary findings on the acute physiological effects of caffeine on adolescents, which is

the next phase of Temple's project, also highlight a caffeine gender gap.

"We did find similar sex differences but are still working on the analyses," Temple said. "Basically, what we are finding is that girls seem less sensitive."

While Temple and Luebbe don't think caffeine is necessarily dangerous for young people, both note that drinking a lot of it isn't healthy for either boys or girls.

"Our research and the work of others suggest that moderate or occasional caffeine use in adolescents is unlikely to have major detrimental effects," Temple said. "But as a parent, I would be aware of how much caffeine my children are consuming and look for signs of excessive use, especially concerning sleep habits."

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