Theobromine Encyclopedia Article

Theobromine

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Theobromine

This ALKALOID belongs to the class of drugs called methylxanthines; it is similar to theophylline and to CAFFEINE. Theobromine (3, 7-dimethylxanthine), however, is somewhat weaker than these two compounds and currently has almost no practical use in medicine.

Theobromine is found in the seeds of the plant *Theobroma cacao*, which is the well-known source of CHOCOLATE and cocoa. The cacao seeds have caffeine too (as does TEA, which contains small amounts of theobromine and theophylline); caffeine has powerful stimulant effects on the brain, whereas theobromine has very little (although popular articles alleged for years that theobromine makes one feel "happy"). High doses of theobromine can, however, affect several physiological functions in the body, such as increasing the formation of urine in the kidney.

Bibliography

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