

## 'High tea' probed for cocaine

The Medicines Control Council is investigating an energy tea said to contain high levels of cocaine, *Beeld* newspaper reported early last week.

Coca Tea reportedly had so much cocaine that users would fail drug tests. It could be bought from shops and pharmacies and was marketed as a herbal tea.

The council had not responded to e-mailed questions by late yesterday afternoon.

According to the Beeld report, Coca Tea was described as a "heavenly magical plant of the Incas".

Two of the paper's reporters each drank a cup of the tea and had their urine tested. Within four hours, both showed benzodiazepine levels of over 1600 nanograms per millilitre in their urine. The cut-off level for drug tests was between 150 and 300ng/ml.

The tea could not make users "high", but worked as a stimulant like caffeine.

On its website, Cocazone, the maker of Coca Tea, said it was not addictive and had been used as a medicine in South America for thousands of years.

However, Spar supermarket said it would ask its franchises to remove the tea from shelves.

Source: *The Times* via I-NET Bridge

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