

Energy Drinks

Dangerous for Teens?



Red Bull



Caffeine

Caffeine is a drug that is naturally produced in the leaves and seeds of many plants. It's also produced artificially and added to certain foods and beverages. Caffeine is defined as a drug because it stimulates the central nervous system, causing increased alertness.

Teens should not consume more than 100 milligrams of caffeine a day. That's about two cans of Mountain Dew or 1 ½ cans of Red Bull.



Too Much

Researchers at the University of Miami conclude energy drinks may cause "...seizures, stroke and even sudden death." They say the drinks pose a risk for serious adverse health effects in some children, especially those with diabetes, seizures, cardiac abnormalities or mood disorders. Energy Drinks often contain double the amount of caffeine in beverages like cola, which can be dangerous for teens with health conditions like cardiovascular, renal or liver disease, seizures, diabetes, mood and behavior disorders and hyperthyroidism.

A caffeine overdose can result in breathing trouble, rapid heartbeat and hallucinations. Which might be why energy drinks were recently given unique reporting codes so that U.S. Poison Centers can track the prevalence of incidents directly tied to energy-drink overdose. The drinks are loaded with sugar, caffeine, and other stimulants.

Teens should try to limit caffeine consumption to no more than 100 mg of caffeine daily, and kids should get even less



'Toxic jock' behavior

The Journal of American College Health published a report on the link between energy drinks, athletics and risky behavior. The study's author, Kathleen Miller, an addiction researcher at the University of Buffalo, says it suggests that high consumption of energy drinks is associated with "toxic jock" behavior. "Toxic Jock" behavior is a constellation of risky and aggressive behaviors including unprotected sex, substance abuse and violence.

That doesn't mean the drinks cause bad behavior. But the data suggest that regular consumption of energy drinks may be a red flag for parents that their children are more likely to take risks with their health and safety.

"It appears the kids who are heavily into drinking energy drinks are more likely to be the ones who are inclined toward taking risks," Dr. Miller says. The American Beverage Association says its members don't market energy drinks to teenagers. "The intended audience is adults," says Craig Stevens, a spokesman for the group. He says the marketing is meant for "people who can actually afford the two or three bucks to buy the products."

Energy Drinks & Alcohol

Adding alcohol to your energy drink can make one feel not as drunk. "You're every bit as drunk, you're just an awake drunk," said Dr. Mary Claire O'Brien, associate professor in the departments of emergency medicine and public health services at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, N.C. Your motor coordination and visual reaction time are just as impaired as when drinking alcohol by itself.

A study of ten universities in North Carolina showed that students who drank energy drinks with alcohol got drunk twice as many times as those who drink alcohol without energy drinks. Also, they have a higher chance to be injured or require medical treatment while drinking.

Some of the stimulants in energy drinks are classified as herbal supplements and are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration.

"Energy Drinks, Dangerous for Kids, Research Shows." *The Huffington Post*. N.p., 02 14 2011. Web. 8 Mar 2011. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/14/energy-drinks-are-dangerous_n_822952.html>.

"Energy Drinks May Put Teenagers at Risk." TODAY HEALTH. N.p., 26 05 2008. Web. 8 Mar 2011. <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/24831859/ns/today-today_health/>.

"What is Caffeine." Kids Health. N.p., n.d. Web. 8 Mar 2011.

<http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/drugs/caffeine.html#a_Moderation_Is_the_Key>.

Energy drink	Caffeine (milligrams)
AMP, 8.4 oz	74
Enviga, 12 oz	100
Full Throttle, 16 oz	144
Monster, 16 oz	160
No Fear, 8 oz	83
No Name (formerly known as Cocaine), 8.4oz	280
Red Bull, 8.3oz	76
Rockstar, 8 oz	80

