

# *next inSTALLment*

*a campus wellness letter*

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**The Hidden Dangers of Energy Drinks**

## What are the Dangers of Energy Drinks?

*Short term:*

- Boost heart rate and blood pressure
- Dehydrate the body
- Prevention of sleep
- Panic attacks
- Anxiety

*Long Term:*

- Tooth erosion
- Stomach problems
- Liver damage
- Seizure
- Death
- In pregnant women, energy drinks have lead to late miscarriages, small fetus size and stillbirths.



## Who is Most at Risk?

Information shows that people who end up in the ER because of the dangers of energy drinks have come from every age group. Although, it was clear that more than half of these patients were college aged (18-25), one third were ages 26-39, and teens and older adults made of the last 11%. This goes to show everybody is at risk when it comes to the energy drinks and the dangers they pose.

## What Ingredients are Commonly Found in Energy Drinks?

- **Caffeine:** A chemical compound which stimulates the nervous system. There is usually about 140mg-170 per every 15oz-16oz can.
- **Glucose:** Sugar, usually found in a combination of fructose and glucose. Most energy drinks contain 50g-60g per 16oz drinks.
- **Guarana:** A South American shrub which seeds contains 4%-5% caffeine. This can increase the heart rate and interact with certain antidepressant medications. The amount of guarana can range from 1.4mg-300mg in any 16 oz energy drink.
- **Taurine:** Naturally occurring amino acid located in your brain where it acts as a neurotransmitter. There can be anywhere from 20mg to 2,000mg in any 16oz energy drink.

## The Effects of Mixing Energy Drinks and Alcohol

- People will tend to underestimate their impairment (can lead to alcohol poisoning)
- People may be under the impression the caffeine has 'sobered them up'
- People are four times more likely to drink and drive when their alcohol is paired with an energy drink
- Increased risk of heart attack
- Leads to overdrinking
- Adding caffeine to alcohol can make it more addictive
- Leads to extreme dehydration

## The Difference Between Energy Drinks and Sports Drinks

While energy drinks contain caffeine and sugar, sports drinks have carbohydrates, electrolytes, and minerals which are helpful in periods of intense exercise.

## Are there Alternatives to Energy Drinks?

The best way to increase your energy level is simply to live a healthier lifestyle. Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get around 8 hours of sleep a night as an alternative to the dangers of energy drinks.

[http://brown.edu/Student\\_Services/Health\\_Services/Health\\_Education/alcohol\\_tobacco\\_&\\_other\\_drugs/energy\\_drinks.php](http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/alcohol_tobacco_&_other_drugs/energy_drinks.php)

[http://www.menshealth.com/mhlists/effectiveness\\_of\\_energy\\_drinks/Caffeine.php](http://www.menshealth.com/mhlists/effectiveness_of_energy_drinks/Caffeine.php)

<http://health.yahoo.net/experts/dayinhealth/dangers-energy-drinks>

[http://www.sigmathetaalpha.org/?id=589:why-to-avoid-mixing-alcohol-and-energy-drinks&option=com\\_content&Itemid=116](http://www.sigmathetaalpha.org/?id=589:why-to-avoid-mixing-alcohol-and-energy-drinks&option=com_content&Itemid=116)

<http://www.besthealthylifestyletips.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/are-energy-drinks-bad-for-you.jpg>