

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Energy Drinks

Energy drinks are gaining in popularity rapidly, but are they really that beneficial. According to the website (<http://w.westonaprice.org/health-topics/>), over the past three years, at least five people have died after drinking Monster energy drinks.

POSSIBLE PROS OF ENERGY DRINKS-

- **Energy Boost**-For those meeting deadlines, energy drinks can be helpful in finishing the last stretch. It has been shown to sharpen alertness and boost energy in times of need, especially in the afternoon when you tend to get more fatigued.
- **Maximizing a workout** - Athletes sometimes use energy drinks to maximize their workouts and training. It can push physical limits to the extreme and help a person to workout longer than without energy drinks.
- **Convenience**-Energy drinks are highly accessible for increasing energy levels versus waiting for a cup of coffee to brew. It is also faster than finding time to take a power nap for rejuvenation.

POSSIBLE CONS OF ENERGY DRINKS-

- **Weight gain** - Since pre-packaged drinks are often filled with high levels of sugar, they can be calorie bombs. Excessive intake of sugar can lead to obesity, which opens the gateway to more medical problems. Treat energy drinks as rare, last-resort, energy boosting options rather than a part of your regular diet.
- **Cardiovascular problems** - Those who overdose on energy drinks are at a higher risk for developing cardiovascular problems such as irregular, rapid heartbeat, and increased blood pressure. The worst case scenario would be heart failure.
- **Psychological hindrances** - While an occasional energy drink can enhance alertness, too much may actually decrease your ability to function. Nervousness, irritability, and anxiety can increase over time, as well as the uncomfortable and distracting “jitters” common in that of an over-caffeinated person, insomnia or disruptive sleep cycles can also develop, which can lead to a lower quality of life overall.
- **Potential metabolic issues** - When you drink an energy drink, you are asking your body to metabolize and process the overwhelming amount of vitamins, additives and sugars. Your body goes into overdrive and produces stress hormones to help cope with the task at hand. Over time the inward and outward stress on your body can be more detrimental than helpful as metabolic issues may arise and lead to medical complications.
- **Dependence** - Energy drinks can be highly addictive if used excessively on a daily basis. Withdrawal symptoms may be present if someone tries to stop including headaches and mood swings.

ENERGY DRINK CAUTIONARY TIPS-

If you feel that energy drinks are still for you, be sure to utilize these tips

When choosing a drink:

- ✓ Try to limit your energy drink to 16 oz. per day, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water with an energy drink. They are not meant to replenish your fluids but to give you a jolt of energy instead.
- ✓ Stay away from energy drinks if you have an underlying health condition, such as pregnancy or cardiovascular problems.
- ✓ Energy drinks are not recommended for young children.
- ✓ Never mix alcohol with energy drinks. Although it is a popular cocktail concoction, it can place a lot of stress on your body and heart, as you are mixing a stimulant (energy drink) with a depressant (alcohol). Your body will basically be fighting itself to act one way or another.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TOO MUCH CAFFEINE-

- ✓ **Rapid heartbeat** - Caffeine excites the nervous system, so it can put pressure on your heart to keep up with this stimulated body state. A rapid heartbeat can be dangerous, especially for this who have a heart condition or suffer with irregular heart rhythms.
- ✓ **Difficulty Sleeping** - Caffeine helps to keep you awake and alert, so it is no surprise that too much will interfere with your sleep patterns.
- ✓ **Frequent Urination**-Caffeine is a diuretic, means it helps your body eliminate fluids, leading to frequent urination.
- ✓ **Nausea** - The diuretic effects of caffeine may lead to nausea.
- ✓ **Breast lumps** - Too much caffeine has been known to result on lumps in the breast.
- ✓ **Muscle tremors** - Drinking too much caffeine has been known to cause the “jitters,” or a nervous tremors.
- ✓ Other side effects are **anxiety, decreased bone mass density, and some nutrition problems.**

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) considers these drinks to be supplements and not sodas, so they don't require them to list the caffeine content on the label. According to a Johns Hopkins study in 2008, the caffeine content in energy drinks varies; some contain the equivalent of 14 Cans of Coca Cola. soda drinks (up to 71 mg. of caffeine per 12 oz.). In contrast, energy drink manufacturers can put as much as they desire, with known content ranging from 160 mg to 500 mg of caffeine per serving. According to Mayo Clinic heavy daily intake is define as ingesting more than 500 to 600 mg per day (6 to 8 cups of coffee). This can be used as a benchmark to tell you the amount of caffeine you consume in your energy drinks.

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