

Energy Drink Boost May Harm Your Health

The next time you feel sluggish and reach for an energy drink, consider the potential health consequences. If you decide to drink it anyway, don't mix it with alcohol!

Energy drinks are widely promoted for their ability to boost energy, enhance mental alertness and improve physical performance. These temporary benefits are provided by ingredients that are potentially harmful to your health.

What's in Energy Drinks?

Energy drinks are sold in containers similar to soft drinks or in a more concentrated form as "shots." They may be labeled as beverages or dietary supplements.

Energy drinks typically contain caffeine, sugar, water, certain vitamins and minerals, and non-nutritive stimulants such as guarana, taurine and ginseng. Health risks associated with energy drinks are mainly attributed to their high caffeine and sugar levels.

Caffeine content ranges from 70 to 240 milligrams (mg) in a 16-ounce drink and 113 to 200 mg in an energy shot. By comparison, a 12-ounce can of cola contains about 35 mg and an 8-ounce cup of coffee about 100 mg of caffeine, according to the [National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health](#), which is part of the National Institutes of Health. A 16-ounce energy drink may contain 54 to 62 grams of added sugar, an amount exceeding recommended daily allowances.



Health and Safety Concerns

A review of scientific studies published in [Frontiers in Public Health](#) links energy drinks to an increased likelihood of depression and anxiety, stomach upsets and digestive problems, increased blood pressure, obesity, kidney damage and tooth decay. The study authors recommend restricting sales to children and adolescents and setting evidence-based caffeine limits for products sold in the U.S.

Large amounts of caffeine may cause heart rhythm disturbances, increases in heart rate and blood pressure, and shakiness. In the U.S., researchers at the [Mayo Clinic](#) found that one 16-ounce energy drink can significantly increase blood pressure and stress hormone responses. In a [Canadian study](#), over half of teenagers and young adults surveyed reported experiencing an adverse health event after consuming energy drinks, including rapid heartbeat, nausea, and in rare instances, seizures.

Consumption of energy drinks may also cause sleep disturbances, fatigue and/or dehydration, conditions that impair cognitive and physical function and increase risk of accidents and injuries.

Mixing alcohol with energy drinks is dangerous because you can be more drunk than you realize. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) also reports that people who mix alcohol with energy drinks are four times more likely to binge-drink, a behavior associated with medical emergencies, physical assaults and risky sexual activity.

While current scientific knowledge suggests negative health effects of energy drinks outweigh beneficial effects, experts say further study is needed, particularly with respect to use by teenagers, young adults and males, who are the primary consumers. Think before you drink.