

Smart Eating Makes the Grade!

What's The 'Buzz' On Energy Drinks?

What is an Energy Drink?

Energy drinks are growing in popularity as they claim to revitalize the mind and body during fatigue. The big question is what is in an energy drink and are they safe?

Examples of energy drinks include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Red Bull Energy Drink
- ◆ SoBe Adrenaline Rush
- ◆ SoBe No Fear
- ◆ Hype Energy Drink
- ◆ Red Dragon Energy Drink
- ◆ Red Rain
- ◆ Dark Dog
- ◆ Rockstar Energy Cola
- ◆ Monster Energy XXL



Energy Drinks are liquids that are mainly made up of sugar, caffeine, vitamins, herbal ingredients and filled with calories. They are not a good source of nutrition and provide no additional health benefits.

There is not enough evidence to support and prove the safe use of energy drinks, especially for children, adolescents, pregnant or breastfeeding moms.

What's the scoop on Caffeine?

Caffeine is the main ingredient in energy drinks. It is often suggested that caffeine increases energy, improves mental and physical performance, improves reaction time and concentration, however there is not enough research to support these claims.

Too much caffeine and not enough milk and milk alternates, can cause calcium to leak out of the bones making them weak and at risk for fractures. Adolescents consuming greater than 100 mg caffeine per day can experience high blood pressure.

Children and teens may easily drink over what is considered a safe level of caffeine intake, if they drink energy drinks.



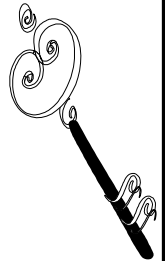
If you have too much caffeine you could also experience:

- ◆ Disrupted sleep patterns
- ◆ Nausea/vomiting
- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Irritability
- ◆ Increased heart rate



Key Nutrition Points

- ◆ The amount of caffeine in energy drinks can vary from 50 mg to 500 mg. It is NOT mandatory to put the amount of caffeine on the label, therefore consumers do not always know the amount of caffeine they are drinking.
- ◆ Energy Drinks have more caffeine than what is recommended for children and teens, and puts them at risk for caffeine intoxication.



Beware the unknown:

Energy drinks are regulated under Canada's Natural Health Product (NHP) regulations. This is because they are usually classified as supplements due to the higher levels of caffeine and other vitamins and herbs.

Energy drinks are not required to have a nutrition facts panel, making it difficult to know exactly what is consumed.

Read the warning label and watch for cautions for use.



The Bottom Line

Energy drinks are NOT recommended for children, adolescents, pregnant or breastfeeding women. There are risks associated with drinking these high caffeine, high sugar and high calorie drinks. There is not enough research to prove that energy drinks are safe to drink. Energy drinks do not provide health benefits to people and should not take the place of healthy drinks such as milk and water.



Activity Corner

Energy drinks have high amounts of caffeine, carbohydrate and carbonation. This prevents athletes from re-hydrating and will inhibit performance in sports and physical activities. Energy drinks are not appropriate to use during exercise, sports and physical activities.

To stay hydrated during short periods of physical activity, drink water.

To stay hydrated during long periods of physical activity (more than 1 hour), use this home made drink recipe: 1 cup 100% unsweetened juice, 1 cup water and a pinch of salt.



Some examples of meals that are high in energy and good to eat before participating in sports are:

- ◆ Spaghetti
- ◆ Yogurt, toast and fruit
- ◆ Fruit smoothie
- ◆ Chicken and rice
- ◆ Peanut butter and honey sandwich



Below is a list of other ingredients that may be included on the energy drink label.

(Adapted from the Calgary Health Region Newsletter "Healthy Bits and Bites". This is not an all-inclusive list).

Other Ingredients	Claims	Scientific Evidence/ Safety
Super Citramax	Suppress appetite, thereby cause weight loss	No evidence to support claims and safety.
Taurine	More alert, enhances exercise performance	Not enough evidence to support this claim.
Carnitine	Improve endurance, Increases fat metabolism, protects against heart disease	No evidence on increased endurance, weight loss and safety.
Panax Ginseng	Speed illness recovery, improve mental, physical performance, control blood sugar and lower blood pressure	No evidence to support claims and safety.
Glucoronolactone	Stimulant	Not enough evidence to support this claim.
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Enhancement of mental and physical performance	Not enough evidence to support these claims.

Fruit Smoothie

This drink is a great alternative to energy drinks.

Makes three ½ cup servings

1 cup strawberries	½ cup low fat yogurt
½ cup orange juice	3 ice cubes
½ cup milk	

In a blender on high speed blend strawberries, orange juice, yogurt, milk and ice for 45 seconds or until smooth.

