

ENERGY DRINKS

Many athletes look to energy drinks and caffeinated beverages for an edge, or to help them power through their workouts. However, are they really helping, or could they be harming?

An energy drink can contain many stimulants, including caffeine, that is marketed to provide “mental and physical stimulation”. They may or may not be carbonated and may also contain sugar, other sweeteners, herbal extracts, taurine, and amino acids.

The typical energy drink—about 12 ounces—contains between 72 and 150 mg of caffeine. Larger cans can have up to 250 mg, and energy shots can contain as much as 260 mg of caffeine.

Energy drinks are often high in caffeine, can contain questionable ingredients, and are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), making them potentially dangerous for athletes to consume.

WHAT INGREDIENTS ARE MOST COMMON IN ENERGY DRINKS?

INGREDIENTS:	COMMENTS:
Caffeine	While moderate caffeine intake may enhance athletic performance, it is not recommended for younger athletes or children. Excess consumption can lead to energy crashes, dehydration, sleep deprivation, and other negative outcomes.
Sugar or sugar alternative	Consuming too much added sugar on a daily basis could lead to health problems and energy crashes. High sugar intake coupled with caffeine could cause added stress on the heart and body.
Tyrosine Herbal extracts Phenylalanine Octopamine Guarana Ginseng Taurine Glucuronolactone	Long-term consumption is not well researched.

WHY ARE ENERGY DRINKS CONSIDERED DANGEROUS FOR ATHLETES AND TEENS?

- False Advertising and Marketing on Labels
 - » In the United States, the FDA regulates caffeine content in soft drinks, but does not regulate caffeine contained in energy drinks.
- Using Energy Drinks as Food Replacements
 - » If you choose to drink energy drinks in place of eating a meal, be aware it could result in energy crashes, often causing you to look for another energy drink. You should make it your goal to get energy from proper nutrition and hydration, including adequate amounts of complex carbohydrates, high-quality protein, and water.
- Decreased Sleep Quality
 - » Consuming energy drinks with high quantities of caffeine, especially in the afternoon, may disrupt sleep. Poor sleep can put you at risk for decreased performance and recovery.
- Caffeine Content
 - » The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends teens avoid caffeine as much as possible. If you choose to consume them, the recommendation is no more than 100 mg per day.

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EXAMPLES OF ENERGY DRINK CONTENT

PRODUCT	PRODUCT SIZE	CAFFEINE
Red Bull	1 small can (8.4 oz)	80 mg
AMP	1 can (16 oz)	142 mg
Monster	1 can (16 oz)	160 mg
Rockstar	1 can (16 oz)	160 mg
NOS	1 can (16 oz)	160 mg
Full Throttle	1 can (16 oz)	160 mg
5-Hour Energy	1 shot (2 oz)	200 mg
Espresso Shot	1 shot (1 oz)	64 mg
Soda	1 can (12 oz)	30-70 mg
Black Coffee	1 cup (8 oz)	91 mg
Tea	1 cup (8 oz)	25 mg

Information compiled directly from the product labels of each energy drink listed.



So how do you get energy without an energy drink?

FOOD! Try to limit your consumption of energy drinks and/or caffeine as much as possible. The goal is to hydrate with water throughout the day and water/sports drinks during/around practices and games. If you're feeling low on energy, the first line of defense should always be food. Grab a nutrient-rich snack for sustained energy to fuel your workout or competition.

SNACK OPTIONS

- Beef jerky trail mix made with nuts, dried fruit, and granola
- Greek yogurt with granola
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Whole grain crackers, cheese, and fruit
- Chocolate milk and a banana
- String cheese and pretzels
- Meat/cheese roll-ups on a tortilla
- Pita bread with hummus and carrot sticks