



Did you know that certain energy drinks contain ingredients that are not deemed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be safe in the food supply? Did you also know that if an energy drink company markets its products as dietary supplements, rather than as food products, they can skip around the FDA approval process?

Makers of dietary supplements can opt to forego disclosing ingredients and/or quantities of ingredients on their product containers. Because of certain existing loopholes like that, energy drink companies can mix such additives into their products under the premise they have proprietary energy blends inside of their drinks. These proprietary energy blends consist of stimulants and other chemicals, all of which do, indeed, provide consumers with rapid energy... with severe consequences.

Energy drinks can hurt you in many ways. Dr. Oz recently published that a single shot of a brand of energy drink has nine times more caffeine than an 8-ounce cup of coffee. The Journal of the American Heart Association also published that energy drinks can potentially harm your heart in ways that far exceed the potential dangers posed by caffeine alone. How? Those “five-hour blasts” can immediately yield elevated blood pressures and ultimately cause irregular heartbeats.

What can elevated blood pressure cause? Let’s reveal the immediate domino effect: Short-term headaches occur when consumers come crashing down from their artificially-induced high. Insomnia also occurs, as does the onset of jitters, nausea and allergic (potentially anaphylactic) reactions.

What about long-term dangers, in addition to the irregular heartbeats that I just mentioned above? Migraines, propensity to panic attacks, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, gout, digestion problems and potentially adverse reactions with prescription medications. Here’s a nasty fact: The BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal) recently linked a patient’s case of hepatitis to their consumption of energy drinks! Let’s not forget these are stimulants; they are physically addicting. Additionally, consumers of energy drinks can artificially trigger “fight or flight” hormone releases, according to a study conducted by the Mayo Clinic. These published and conclusive facts have even prompted the World Health Organization to recently publish a warning letter concerning the dangers that energy drinks pose.

If you consume energy drinks, I want this article to scare you, and to also educate you. If you're participating in our American eHealth Wellness Program, try taking your blood pressure every half hour after consuming an energy drink for a period of six hours, then compare those readings against your normal wake-up readings. I guarantee you'll see some scary elevations. If you'd like to borrow a blood pressure cuff to help you to distance yourself away from energy drinks, send an email to Dr. Alex Neonakis: AN@AmericanEHealth.com.

If you consume energy drinks and would like to reduce your risk of health ailments, we're here to help. Again, these energy drinks cause physical addictions, so your strategy should be one of tapering off. You may need to force yourself to choose coffee over energy drinks, while you taper off. Diluting energy drinks with water (50/50 mix) will still yield energy but will also afford you the opportunity to break free of the energy drink curse. Of course, cigarettes, chewing tobacco and vapor sticks should all be avoided when consuming energy drinks. If any member of the LAPPL would like additional help at no cost, send an email to Jimmy Baldea at JB@AmericanEHealth.com.

I realize we are in a line of work that sometimes begs us for every bit of energy we have. But there are better ways to obtain energy. Wearing sunglasses with orange lenses throughout the day to reduce stresses caused by light can increase your level of energy. Eating one hard-boiled egg with oatmeal, blueberries and yogurt will improve your internal makeup and will yield positive energy. Consuming two kiwi fruits each day will also improve your energy levels. Smoked salmon in the morning works, too, as do cucumbers and coconuts. Don't forget about a daily multivitamin and some vitamin B-12. If you must insist on caffeine, switch to green tea because it's a lot better for you than energy drinks and/or coffee. Lastly, try swapping your hot cup of coffee for a hot cup of water with lemons, and let me know how much better you feel!

If you need anything 24/7, don't hesitate to reach out at MarkCronin@lappl.org or on my cell at (661) 510-6129.