

Do you try to fit as much as you can into your busy days?

Do you end up frazzled and tired when you need to be focused and alert?

Some people turn to energy drinks to help them keep up in today's fast-paced world. But using these drinks to get a quick jolt can cause problems and isn't the best long-term solution.

Is it your health?

If you feel very tired much of the time, see a health care provider.

- **Get checked.** Depression, anemia, diabetes, mononucleosis, thyroid problems or infections can cause you to feel tired, sluggish or irritable. These can all be treated.
- **Check your medicines.** Antihistamines, sleep aids and medicines for anxiety and motion sickness can all make you drowsy. Ask your provider about side effects of any meds you take.

If your health checks out, try adding some of the natural energy boosters in this pamphlet to your lifestyle.

1

What's Up with Energy Drinks?

A closer look at the ingredients will give you a better idea of what puts the energy into energy drinks—and what some of the problems might be with using them.

Caffeine

Energy drinks contain anywhere from 50 to 500 milligrams (mg) of caffeine per can or bottle.

This can be risky for several reasons:

- **More than 200 to 300 mg of caffeine a day** (about 2–4 cups of home brewed coffee) can make you feel nervous or irritable, cause your heart to beat faster and increase your blood pressure.
- **Caffeine is a drug.** It loses its zing as you get used to it. So regular users have to drink more to get the same effects.
- **Caffeine can make it hard to sleep at night.** So you're tired the next day. Then you might be tempted to use caffeine again to stay awake, which will make it hard to sleep that night, setting up a repeating cycle.
- **You may have withdrawal symptoms** if you cut back. Headaches, upset stomach and feeling cranky are common.

Guarana, another common ingredient, also has a lot of natural caffeine, which adds to the total amount.

2

Sugar

- **Many energy drinks contain sugar.** Sugar can give you a brief lift or "sugar high." But it's followed by fatigue, brain fog and mood drop.
- **A single can of a typical energy drink** can have between 42 and 81 grams (10 to 20 teaspoons) of sugar. Many people drink more than 1 can a day.
- **The American Heart Association** recommends no more than 20 grams (5 teaspoons) of sugar a day for women and 36 grams (9 teaspoons) for men. More can cause weight gain and may increase blood pressure.

Taurine and B-Vitamins

- **Taurine and B vitamins don't give you energy by themselves.** But getting enough of these nutrients can help the body use the energy from foods and beverages.
- **Energy drinks don't contain enough B vitamins or taurine** to help the body use energy better.

3

Energy Drinks and Alcohol

Some people mix energy drinks with alcohol. They believe the caffeine counters the alcohol and makes it safer to drink more. This is a mistake.

- **People get just as drunk, even though the caffeine makes them feel like they're not.** This can lead to risky behaviors, such as drinking and driving, unsafe sex or fighting, and even to alcohol poisoning.
- **The FDA has ruled it's not safe to mix high-caffeine energy drinks and alcohol.** Several premixed alcoholic energy drinks are no longer legal to sell.



"I've found lots of ways to get quick, healthy energy that lasts."

4

5 Ways to Boost Energy Naturally

Eat small and snack smart. Three small meals and two healthy snacks a day help keep your energy up. Balance your meals with:

- **Carbohydrates for energy.** Choose whole wheat, corn, oats, rice, barley, fruits and vegetables.
- **Protein to help your energy last.** Try poultry, fish, lean meat, eggs, cheese, milk, yogurt, beans and nuts.
- **Small amounts of healthy fats to feel full.** Fish, nuts and vegetable oils are healthy choices.
- **Snack on fruit and a low-fat protein for a boost that lasts for hours.**

Have breakfast. Include carbohydrates, proteins and fats to jump start your day and keep you going.

- You won't get hungry and your energy will last longer.
- Choose whole-grain cereal, fruit and low-fat milk. Or blend it all up into a smoothie.
- Avoid sugary cereals, fruit juice, candy or soft drinks. They may give you a quick lift, but your energy will soon drop and you'll be hungry again.

Drink water. Caffeine, dry indoor air and exercise can drain your body's water supply. If you don't replace it, you wind up feeling tired and may get a headache.

- Drink 8 to 12 glasses (2–3 quarts) of plain water every day. Milk, soy milk, 100% fruit juice and soup all count toward your daily amount.
- For more flavor, add lemon, lime or orange slices or a sprig of fresh mint.

Get moving. A brisk 5- or 10-minute walk can quickly raise your energy and clear your head.

- Get 30 minutes of aerobic activity on most days of the week for ongoing energy.
- Find activities you enjoy that make you breathe harder and break a sweat. Walk, dance, bike, run or play sports.
- Get support. It's easier to keep going if you're active with friends.

Get enough sleep. Your energy, mood, focus and memory depend on it.

- The average adult needs 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night. Children and teens need more.
- Stick to a regular routine for meals, bedtime and waking up. This helps set your internal sleep clock.
- Don't have coffee, tea, chocolate, or any drinks with caffeine after mid-afternoon (or even earlier). Alcohol and tobacco use can also interfere with sleep.
- Don't exercise within 3 hours of bedtime. The same physical activity that gives you energy in the daytime can keep you awake at night.

Splash water on your face or take a cool shower for a quick energy pickup.

What works for you?

- Notice what works. Did a healthy afternoon snack perk you up? Did you enjoy your morning walk break? Did going to bed at the same time each night this week raise your energy levels?
- Choose the energy ideas you like. Slowly add them to your daily habits. Add more as you go along.

Energy Drinks



Professional models were used in all photos. This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

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