

What are they?

Energy drinks are non-alcoholic beverages marketed as boosting energy, increasing alertness and increasing physical and mental performance.

What's in them?

They often contain:

- large amounts of caffeine
- large amounts of sugar
- artificial sweeteners
- other substances (taurine, B vitamins and herbs such as ginseng and guarana) claiming to increase energy and mental alertness but lack scientific evidence

What are the health concerns?

High sugar content

- After water, sugar is the main ingredient in energy drinks.
- Over consumption of sugary drinks may increase the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

Health risks

- Excessive sugar and stimulants can pose a health risk to vulnerable groups - children and adolescents, pregnant women, and those with diabetes and heart disease.
- Studies show that people who drank 32 ounces (4 cups/900 ml) of energy drinks in 1 hour have abnormal electrical activity in their hearts and higher blood pressure 4 hours later.
- For children aged 12-18, daily caffeine intake should not be more than 100 mg. Some energy drinks may contain as much as 500 mg (the amount in 14 cans of cola or 5 cups coffee)
- Too much caffeine can cause anxiety, insomnia, heart problems like irregular heartbeat and elevated blood pressure, and in rare cases seizures or cardiac arrest.

Dangerous cocktail with alcohol

- When combined with alcohol, energy drinks increase alertness masking the feeling of intoxication often leading to greater alcohol intake than if just drinking alcohol alone.

Negative effects in adolescents and young athletes

- Risk-seeking & aggressive behaviour, poor mental health, stress
- Irregular heart-beat, increased blood pressure
- Anxiety and poor sleep quality
- Metabolic, renal, or dental problems
- Increased risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes



What can you do?

- Avoid consumption by children and adolescents
- Limit or eliminate consumption if pregnant or nursing
- Don't use energy drinks to replace adequate sleep or proper nutrition.
- Talk to your physician if you have an underlying health condition
- Consult a nutrition professional about nutritious alternatives