

# Energy drinks analysis narrative

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Energy Drinks The use of energy drinks in the United States has increased more than the controversial consumption of regular sodas. According to Coca-Cola executives, profits from energy products since 2005 through 2008 will total \$540 million, compared with \$210 million for regular soft drinks, \$130 million for bottled water and \$290 million for sports drinks (Warner). So what is it about these drinks that make them more popular than our pure and vital water? The answer is very simple; our hectic lifestyles.

Today's society is filled with exhaustion and high stress levels; many people rely on energy drinks to give them that second wind, which helps them stay awake through a test, and even revive them for a party. According to Simmons Research, thirty-one percent of teenagers in the United States say they drink energy drinks on a regular basis. People use energy drinks to boost their energy so they can be able to perform better, but because energy drinks contain ingredients that harm the human body they should be banned all over the world. There are some factors that increase the popularity of energy drinks.

For example the easy to grab structure in which they are packed. The small container makes it quick to drink down, and the smaller scale gives the impression that the contents are more concentrated, which attracts the consumer even more. The color of the energy drinks is another reason for their popularity; a combination of bright and vivid colors such as acidic greens and yellows, black and red suggest a sense of energy and high performance. The mystery flavor in energy drinks is another reason why these drinks are consumed in excess. Compared to a typical juice offering,

there is little or nothing about energy drink packaging to tell the consumer what the product tastes like.

Instead, the graphic emphasis is more on the consumer's sensibilities and attitude than flavor or thirst (Patterns). It is pathetic to see how big companies and manufacturers of these products use the ignorance and lack of knowledge of people to make a profit. Unfortunately we cannot victimize ourselves and blame everything on them. We are responsible for what we do and I believe that we should do some research before we buy a product that is obviously not natural at all. Energy drinks are made up of caffeine, taurine, guarana, ginseng, ginkgo, ephedrine, B vitamins and many other sugars.

Caffeine is one of the most active ingredients in energy drinks; it is a psychoactive substance found in the beans, leaves and fruit of over 60 plants; it stimulates the nervous and cardiovascular system. Taurine is an amino acid that our body naturally produces, but in energy drinks the taurine is a synthetic element. It helps regulate heartbeat, muscle contractions, and energy levels. Usually our body makes enough so that we don't need to supplement.

Guarana is derived from South America plants and it contains approximately three times more caffeine than coffee beans. It stimulates the central nervous system, cardiac muscle, as well as the respiratory system. B vitamins help convert sugar to energy. Ginseng is an herbal stimulant used to cure, from stress to poor memory to diabetes.

Ginkgo is another herbal stimulant that is used to treat memory loss, headaches, ringing in the ears and depression. Ephedrine is a stimulant,  
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used as a decongestant in treatments of asthma. The chemical structure is similar to amphetamines and methamphetamines. This stimulant is found in weight loss pills, it speeds up metabolism by causing energy that is acquired from food to burn faster.

These ingredients do not sound harmful at all. Many of them are natural and even beneficial for our health. So why have energy drinks been banned in a few countries? Lets me now introduce to you the negative sides of all these ingredients. According to Roland Griffiths, a professor in behavioral biology, the amount of caffeine that is necessary to produce dependency and withdrawal symptoms is about 100 milligrams a day. A can of energy drink has 80 to 160 milligrams (Warner).

Some of the side effects that the use of caffeine creates are dependency, diarrhea, copious urination and headaches. It also increases the heart rate, blood flow, respiratory rate, and metabolic rate for several hours. Caffeine causes anxiety, irritability, high sensitivity to noise, and self-mutilations. There are four caffeine-induced psychiatric disorders recognized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition: caffeine-induced anxiety disorder, caffeine-induced sleep disorder, and caffeine-related disorder not otherwise specified (NOS).

Caffeine is also associated with a high risk of developing Parkinson's disease in men. The side-effects that taurine causes are almost the same as caffeine, but many people claim that it kills your heart, since it is found in the central nervous system, skeletal and is more heavily concentrated in heart tissues and the brain. Taurine found in energy drinks is a synthetic vitamin that does

not perform the same functions in the human body as vitamins found naturally in whole food nutrients would. These vitamins actually deplete the body of other nutrients, and overstretch your kidneys before being excreted through the urine.

The side effects of Ginseng are nervousness, insomnia, and diarrhea. The effects of ginkgo are restlessness, upset stomach, diarrhea, and vomiting. A soft drink usually has 19 to 25 grams of sugar in each eight-ounce serving. Energy drinks on average contain more than this.

Red Bull, for example, contains 27 grams of sugar per serving of 250 milliliters (a little over eight ounces). This can be very dangerous, for an overload of sugar can lead to gastric emptying. This often results in nausea and vomiting. As it was stated above each of the ingredients that a energy drink contain have several and powerful side effects when taken separately, imagine how dangerous they be can when taken all at the same time. People are using energy drinks as an alternate for proper rest, nutrition, and exercise like the spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, Roberta Anding said (Ellis). Many health problems can develop from the lack of proper rest like a weakened immune system, depression, high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes.

The best substitute of energy drinks is water. Our body is 55 to 75 percent made out of water and its benefits are countless. Water improves energy, increases mental and physical performance, removes toxins and waste products from the body, keeps the skin healthy and glowing, helps to lose weight, reduces headaches and dizziness, helps digestion, helps the heart

work better, reduces stress, and prevents urinary tract infections by flushing out impurities from the body. Many people that do not like to drink water can replace the energy drinks with natural juices such as orange which are 87 percent water or by eating cucumbers which are 95 percent water.

Milk is another liquid that can replace energy drinks. Milk is our first source of nutrition when we are born; we are fed with this liquid before he can digest other food. Milk is made out of saturated fat, protein, calcium and vitamin C. Saturated fat provides the building blocks for cell membranes and it also acts as a carrier for vitamins A, D, E and K.

This fat makes the lungs healthier, prevents stroke, and protects kidneys from diseases. Calcium makes up 70 percent of the bone weight and gives it strength and rigidity. Vitamin C helps the body produce a basic component of connective tissues called collagen. Collagen is an important element in the blood vessel walls, gums, and bones. Vitamin C functions as an antioxidant, it helps boost immune function protects against cancer, cataracts, deterioration of the retina, and other chronic diseases.

Nowadays we live in a society that is always on the go and we are always looking for ways to get more energy to be able to get through school, work or any other duties that we may have. But putting our lives in danger by consuming energy drinks is not worth it. The government should definitely do something about it instead of letting some people get rich by the ignorance and lack of knowledge of most of the people that consume these harmful drinks. Works Cited Clayton, Lawrence. Amphetamines and Other Stimulants.

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