

Energy drinks

Literature



Modern life has become fast-paced and the multitudes of work to be done require plenty of effort now more than before. Be it in school or in the office, many people have turned to energy drinks as a source of boost for their inadequate physical endurance and mental strength in addressing the demands of modern living. As the name itself easily suggests, ‘energy drinks’ are supposed to supplement people with the energy they need. Since they contain a combination of vitamins and plenty of caffeine, energy drinks have become a popular alternative to coffee and other caffeinated beverages.

It is not surprising, therefore, if there are people who have developed a form of dependency on energy drinks after consuming them regularly for a certain period. However, there are also those who see energy drinks not as a boom but as a bane to the health of individuals. While these drinks may provide people with additional energy, it is often stated that they also have negative effects on the human body especially if they are taken habitually and in amounts that exceed safe limits. There are reasons why certain people support the consumption of energy drinks.

On the other hand, there are also reasons why some others oppose the same, to the point that attempts have been made to ban the production, distribution and sale of energy drinks in some areas. This paper seeks to explore those reasons by surveying past and recent literature with respect to the effects of energy drinks on the human body. After an assessment on whether energy drinks can potentially endanger the lives of people, this paper will suggest ways on how to increase the awareness of the people on what these drinks have to offer, whether good or bad.

This paper will also try to explore the possible measures which can be adopted in order to properly regulate the production, distribution and actual selling of energy drinks to the larger public. Energy drinks: the good side

There are several reasons why people buy energy drinks. Today, it may be said that even age and status in life no longer pose rigid limitations as to who exactly can take advantage of what energy drinks have to offer. Some individuals can consume a certain dose of energy drinks for no strong reason except that they simply want to quench their thirst.

The most apparent effect of energy drinks is that they boost a person's energy. This is due to the ingredients contained in most energy drinks. For instance, energy drinks contain caffeine, sugar, B vitamins and certain kinds of herbs. The combination of these ingredients is said to help increase a person's physical, mental and cognitive performances. For this reason, it is not surprising that people have patronized energy drinks. In fact, there are numerous brands of energy drinks out in the market, each one purporting to cater to specific preferences and conditions of the consumers.

Some brands are labeled as an excellent source of energy for athletes while some other brands are tagged as powerful mental boosters for office workers and students. At any rate, it may be said that the fast-paced modern world requires from every person quick and efficient responses—and energy drinks are there to help them achieve that daily routine. Aside from caffeine, there are at least other common ingredients of most energy drinks: taurine and glucuronolactone. Both are produced naturally by the human body.

Energy drinks can replace both glucuronolactone and taurine that the body loses during stressful situations and high physical activity (Olson). Both are

<https://assignbuster.com/energy-drinks-essay-samples/>

important to the human body as they naturally cleanse the body from harmful toxins and provide natural energy boost. People who work overtime or who labor intensely are part of the large numbers of those who consume energy drinks. Even students who are prompted by long hours of studying and doing schoolwork have the similar disposition to use these drinks as a source of the energy they need in order to complete their tasks over extended durations.

In a way, it can be seen that energy drinks may be responsible for motivating people to continue with their tasks. On a larger scale, a workforce able to perform better and produce more output within a constrained period will certainly yield positive results. Although energy drinks may not be solely responsible for such consequence, it may nevertheless be safely assumed that it has its share. The history of the energy drink is replete with indicators that it was initially produced to aid the physical well-being of individuals.

As early as the second half of the twentieth century, energy drinks were already being produced in Japan with the same modern tagline as increasing an individual's physical energy levels. Without doubt, early energy drinks were particularly formulated for people engaged in intense labor or those involving protracted hours of work that require physical endurance. Through the years, the benefits of energy drinks were later seen as applicable to athletes. Today, athletes and even people who are active in sports rely on energy drinks in order to supplement or quickly replenish their stock of energy.

Similarly, energy drinks are oftentimes labeled as drinks that promote wakefulness. Apparently, those who stand to benefit from the mental

alertness induced by energy drinks are the people who are in a desperate need to stay fully awake due to particular circumstances. Students who need to study overnight or to be awake in class after still feeling sluggish belong to this group. In particular, employees who need to beat deadlines the following morning and who are barely able to stay awake for the rest of the night also fall to this classification.

Some employees working in graveyard shifts also consume energy drinks. For example, nurses and doctors who spend late hours in the hospital may rely on energy drinks from time to time in order to help them keep awake and alert for the rest of the evening. The same may also be said about corporate employees in outsourcing companies that serve clients from other time zones. At the most, energy drinks are perceived as useful aid for those who need to stay awake for different reasons. Without doubt, there is a different side to energy drinks.

There are concerned groups who express their opposition to the consumption of energy drinks especially on regular intervals. At the heart of the sharp criticism against energy drinks is that they are said to contain chemicals and other substances that may endanger the health of individuals. While it may be conceded that energy drinks have short term benefits, it is likewise urged that they also have negative consequences in the long run. Thus, instead of promoting a person's health, energy drinks may actually harm a person. Energy drinks: the bad side

Monster Energy is one of the more popular energy drinks available in almost every store in America. Interestingly, the product contains double the worth of strong coffee's caffeine for every single serving of sixteen ounces

(Laitner). It may be admitted that there is nothing inherently wrong with drinking caffeinated beverages like Monster Energy. In fact, medical experts may even suggest some of their patients experiencing sluggishness to consume a certain dosage of energy drinks every once in a while. However, it is the dosage and frequency of consumption that is crucial.

Like other beverages sold in the market, energy drinks should be consumed only in moderation. Stated otherwise, people should not consume energy drinks more than what is actually needed by their body. As of the first quarter of 2011, the American Association of Poison Control Centers has already logged at least three hundred and forty incidents of adverse health effects as a result of consuming energy drinks with high caffeine levels, and that most of the data gathered revealed that many young people are part of the statistics (Laitner).

The numbers may be insignificant on the whole scale but they tell one thing: the risks are real. More importantly, even young people who are presumed to be at a better health condition than most adults are not immune from the risks. That being said, the effects of energy drinks potentially cut across the age borders. There are also alcoholic energy drinks being sold in other parts of the world. In Australia, medical authorities have warned about the negative effects of these drinks to young people (Collier).

What is more interesting is that these drinks are being consumed by teenagers aged between twelve and seventeen (Collier). At a very young age, these individuals are already exposed to the harms brought about not only by energy drinks but their combination with alcohol. Apparently, the effect on the body of these alcoholic energy drinks is a combination of a

<https://assignbuster.com/energy-drinks-essay-samples/>

feeling of being simultaneously ‘ alert’ and ‘ drowsy’. The Australian Drug Foundation has already warned about the negative effects of these drinks and the research recently conducted confirms these effects (Collier).

One of the more serious consequences of consuming energy drinks on a regular basis and beyond the required amounts is that it can cause health problems to a person’s cardiovascular, central nervous, musculoskeletal and renal systems (Babu). These risks are not to be taken lightly since they comprise the critical parts of the human body. Impairments in any one of these system of organs can greatly weaken a person and affect one’s daily routines. Apparently, these effects may come in the long term. This is probably the tricky part.

Since these effects begin to be felt only after a certain period, a person may initially think that his consumption of energy drinks has not been affecting his health. However, once the effects have already begun to set in, it might be too late and the person may require hospitalization and complicated medical treatment. A harmless start may soon turn into a physically daunting end. Energy drinks contain plenty of sugar and the sugar contained in them are known to cause diarrhea and gastrointestinal pains which, in any case, will never improve the performance of any office employee, student or athlete (Miller).

The effects become more pronounced if a person consumes energy drinks on a regular basis. Without doubt, a person may thereafter suffer from regular stomach upsets and diarrhea. Instead of actually helping an individual perform better at his or her tasks, the contrary is more likely to happen. It has been noted that the American diet is already filled with B-vitamins and,
<https://assignbuster.com/energy-drinks-essay-samples/>

consequently, energy drinks which are most of the time likewise filled with B-vitamins do not really help the body.

On the contrary, energy drinks can only potentially yield to an overload of B-vitamins in the human body (Brody). In effect, the body may not be able to absorb the overload of B-vitamins thereby resulting to certain bodily reactions. Vitamins should still be taken in moderation only as they can also adversely affect the body when taken in uncontrolled amounts. Even the term ‘energy drink’ is highly ambiguous. For the most part, the term itself is neither approved nor created by the FDA and the USDA; the manufacturers themselves coined the label (Babu).

While these drinks are not being pulled out of the shelves for using a label that is not sanctioned by the FDA and the USDA, they continue to play on the sensibilities of the public. It is a fact that energy can be taken from any food. Most of them come in the form of calories. To say that a certain beverage is an ‘energy drink’ is to create the impression that it gives energy more than what one could normally derive from the average daily meals and snacks. It may be true that these energy drinks can provide people with energy but it is another matter altogether to claim that they can radically increase the energy levels of an individual.

It may even be pointed out that a person may opt to eat fruits and vegetables several hours before a physically and mentally grueling task instead of consuming a can of energy drink before performing the task. It is a healthier approach with more benefits for the human body without the aid of artificial ingredients and chemicals. Identifying the problem and providing solutions It may be said that a person has the freedom to choose whatever

he wants to consume. The basis for saying this is that a person has full autonomy over his own body.

Thus, no one can be prevented from purchasing what is openly available in stores. This proposition is crucial since it establishes the idea that the main concern should naturally be focused on the individual. However, this does not relieve the manufacturers of energy drinks from any responsibility. On the contrary, the imperative to pay attention to the consumers necessitates that manufacturers have a big role to fill. It has been observed that there is little scientific research available and government regulation with respect to energy drinks (Seifert, et al.).

This is worrisome since energy drinks have been manufactured and sold throughout the world for at least two decades. It may be one of the significant reasons why there are only very few available comprehensive information about the negative effects of energy drinks on the human body. In this day and age where more and more energy drink products are being produced—an indicator that there is a growing market for energy drinks—it is indeed imperative that more information about energy drinks should be made available to the public. It is important to inform and educate consumers about the effects of energy drinks on the human body.

One way to achieve this is to provide the right information on the labels of products. Instead of purely flaunting catchphrases that tease the sensibilities of consumers, products should contain labels that clearly warn consumers of the negative effects of energy drinks if and when they are consumed in high quantities and in regular intervals. It is safe to say that a serving of Monster Energy once every week, for example, does not necessarily endanger a

<https://assignbuster.com/energy-drinks-essay-samples/>

person's health. However, regular consumption of the product—akin to an addiction—will certainly take its toll on the body.

For this reason, products should contain warnings about the regular consumption of energy drinks. The warning should be visible enough and should not be placed in an obscure part of the product. This is a direct approach in informing the general public about energy drinks without the intervention of the government. Manufacturers should be responsible enough to take the initiative. Schools can also take part in informing young students about the energy drinks. Forums and symposiums may be conducted within school premises. Medical practitioners and representatives from the FDA and USDA can be invited as guest speakers.

Students should be encouraged to give frank questions about energy drinks in order to remove any lingering doubts about their effects. Teachers may also include in their discussions on biochemistry or on human anatomy the benefits and harms of energy drinks. Documentaries about the effects of energy drinks may also be presented before classes of students. All of these suggestions can easily be done and require very minimal resources on the part of the school. Moreover, they immediately address the need to inform the younger population.