



# Energy Drinks

Most products promoted as energy drinks claim to provide quick energy or to delay the onset of fatigue:

## THE FACTS:

- 1) Energy is provided by fuel (calories) that comes from foods containing carbohydrates and fats (protein to a lesser extent).
- 2) Many energy drinks promote that they are calorie-free; therefore, by this claim they *cannot* provide energy.
- 3) Vitamins do not provide energy.
- 4) Some energy drinks do provide an intense shot of sugar to provide quick but non-lasting energy.
- 5) Most “energy” drinks are “stimulant” drinks providing little in the way of energy.
- 6) A typical ingredient in “energy” drinks is caffeine, which at high levels can lead to a positive drug test.
- 7) Herbal or “natural” forms of caffeine are no healthier than regular caffeine.
- 8) Many products contain other central nervous system stimulants such as ephedra or ma huang, which may be impermissible for athlete use and may prove to be deadly.
- 9) Common products added to energy drinks such as: bee pollen, ginseng, carnitine, taurine, Co-enzyme Q, pyruvate, creatine, inositol, amino acids and ginko biloba have no proven energy-enhancing properties and may interfere / react unfavorably with other supplements, foods and medications.

## PROS:

- Some studies have supported a performance-enhancing effect of caffeine, especially for endurance events.

## CONS:

- An athlete may not be aware of the amount of caffeine they are consuming since it is not always clearly listed on ingredient labels, and the cumulative impact of several caffeine-containing products can lead to excessive levels.
- Caffeine may not be easily identifiable as an ingredient. (Forms of caffeine include: green tea, guarana, Brazilian cocoa, mate’ and gotu kola).
- When energy is supplied in the form of sugar, it results in a quick energy burst followed quickly by a crash.
- A rapid heart rate, and/or increased blood pressure can increase the load on the athlete’s cardiovascular system, already overloaded due to activity. This can be dangerous.
- The jitters and inability to focus can result in missed assignments and poor performance.

## CAUTIONS:

- Since an athlete may not be aware of the amount of caffeine they are consuming, they may be unwittingly be placing themselves at risk of a positive drug screen.
- Tolerance to stimulants varies among individuals, and that which may have no impact on a teammate, may prove detrimental to another.
- Mixing/stacking various stimulants from a variety of products may prove to be life threatening.
- Mixing energy drinks with alcohol can be particularly lethal.

Some supplements (not only performance-enhancing supplements) have been shown to contain contaminants or dangerous levels of active ingredients that may lead to impaired performance, injury or death. Apparently safe supplements may also contain contaminants that lead to a positive drug screen.

The student-athlete is ultimately responsible for any substance that they put into their body, and should use reliable sources to research supplements, and discuss their efficacy with appropriate Athletic Department personnel.