

BASES Bulletin 01/07: Energy Drinks

Today's market is filled with all kinds of choices when it comes to beverages. The packaging makes it more convenient to consume any type of beverage while on the road and rushing to school, work, recreational activities, sporting events or home. Our days are filled with activities that leave many of us depleted of energy. A new breed of drinks has emerged and slowly crept into our lifestyles - the energy drink, aka: Red Bull, Monster, Full Throttle, Amp, Spark, etc. Who is the target audience? Individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 years old; however, children are consuming this beverage and many parents are unaware of the impact. The energy drink is carefully marketed to offer the illusion of strength, power and an answer to keep with the fast pace promoted through our American culture. Sales of energy drinks in the United States rose over 30% from the previous year and projected revenues are expected to reach 3 billion this year.

The advertising market states that energy drinks are harmless but physicians across the nation are warning teens of their dangers. Individuals who should not consume high doses of caffeine are: pregnant women, infants and small children, and people with psychiatric disorders or anxiety conditions such as panic attacks. They contain high amounts of caffeine, sugar, and mixtures of herbs and other substances. High doses of caffeine produces fluid loss leaving us feeling dehydrated. Other health effects may include:

- Possible heart palpitations
- Dehydration effects: headaches, dizziness, fainting and convulsions or heart failure
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Indigestion – stomach problems
- Sugar rush followed by a crash – low energy: you end up drinking more to prevent fatigue, which leads to higher consumption and another crash - triggering a vicious cycle.

According to local bar owners, it is more common to see requests for mixing energy drinks with alcohol. The stimulant effects of an energy drink can prevent a person from realizing how much alcohol has been consumed that may result in higher blood alcohol levels.