

## Teens and Energy Drinks — What Parents Should Know

Research suggests that teens and young adults who consume energy drinks are also likely to engage in risk taking behavior. These actions are called “toxic jock” behavior. They include unprotected sex, substance abuse and violence.

The Journal of American College Health shared a new study on energy drinks. This research informs parents that kids who often use energy drinks are more likely to take risks with their health and safety.

Thirty percent of 12 to 24 year olds drink super caffeinated drinks regularly. Red Bull, Monster, Full Throttle, Amp and Spike Shooter are some of the popular brands. Doctors and school officials report that some kids who consume energy drinks complain of nausea, abnormal heart rhythms with sweating and a jittery feeling.

The caffeine content in these energy drinks is high. Compare the caffeine levels in the following drinks in the chart below. Teens sip hot coffee, but they usually drink cold energy drinks quickly. So, the jolt of caffeine enters their body quickly.



Another concern includes the mixing of energy drinks with alcohol. Those who drink this mixture feel less drunk. Yet, they are still just as impaired as when they drink alcohol alone. One study showed that college students who mixed energy drinks with alcohol were more likely to:

- Get drunk twice as often as those who just drank alcohol;
- Be injured or require medical treatment while drinking;
- Be victims of aggressive sexual behavior; and/or
- Commit aggressive sexual behavior.

You can help your teen make healthy choices. Watch your teen’s diet. Look for energy drinks in your refrigerator, cooler or teen’s car. Discuss the harmful effects of caffeine and safety issues about alcohol and energy drinks. Encourage eight hours of sleep.

Teens follow teens. They seldom think about dangers and consequences. Arm your child with the facts needed to make a healthy choices about energy drinks.

Drink	Milligrams of caffeine
12 oz. Pepsi/Coke .....	34 to 38
12 oz. Amp.....	107
Red Bull.....	116
Monster.....	120
WiredX344.....	258
Spike Shooter.....	428
Starbucks 12 oz. cappuccino or latte.....	75
Starbucks 12 oz. brewed coffee .....	up to 250

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week or log onto [www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)