Article 1

Is Red Bull Energy Drink safe?

from: http://energydrink-us.redbull.com/red-bull-is-safe

Red Bull Energy Drink is available in more than 166 countries, including every state of the European Union, because health authorities across the world have concluded that Red Bull Energy Drink is safe to consume. More than 5 billion cans and bottles were consumed last year alone and about 40 billion cans since Red Bull was created more than 26 years ago.

One 8.4 fl oz can of Red Bull Energy Drink contains 80mg of caffeine, about the same amount of caffeine as in a cup of coffee. With regards to the other key ingredients the European Food Safety Authority concluded in 2009 that these are of no health concern.
Just how bad are energy drinks?
Answer by Diana Koelliker, MD

In recent years, a number of energy drinks have entered the market to provide a quick boost of energy. These drinks usually contain high levels of caffeine and other additives, such as taurine, ginseng and carnitine that act as stimulants.

The average eight ounce cup of coffee contains about 100 mg of caffeine. Some energy drinks contain as much as 500 mg of caffeine per serving in addition to the other stimulants found in these beverages.

Because energy drinks are sold as nutritional supplements, they are not regulated as foods. Therefore, the FDA does not regulate or limit the amount or content of ingredients in these drinks; you may not know exactly what you are drinking when you consume these products.

So, does that necessarily mean these drinks are bad for you? In small doses, caffeine is a pretty innocuous substance. However, in high concentrations, it can cause sleep disturbances, anxiety, restlessness, elevation in blood pressure and heart rate, abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmia), seizures and even death.

As an Emergency physician, we certainly have seen an increase in visits related to energy drinks. In 2005 there were about 1,100 ER visits in the US related to these drinks; in 2008 there were more than 16,000 visits. The numbers continue to rise.

What’s worse, the trend of combining energy drinks with alcohol is popular with college students and young adults. This may be due to a misconception that caffeine counteracts alcohol; it does not.

A high caffeine content stimulant effect can prevent a person from becoming sleepy, but it does not prevent impairment, nor does it quicken reaction time or motor skills. Caffeine and alcohol together can lead to increased participation in risky behavior, like driving. It also can lead to what I call the "superman effect," where the person believes they can skateboard down a flight of stairs. The consequences can be dangerous and even deadly.

Energy drinks are especially dangerous for children and adolescents. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends energy drinks should never be consumed by children or adolescents.

High levels of caffeine have been associated with harmful neurologic and cardiovascular effects in children, and drinks containing stimulants should never be given for hydration or as a supplement to young persons. Parents should warn teenagers and young adults of the dangers of mixing these drinks with alcohol.

In summary, if you have a history of high blood pressure, heart problems, seizures or if you are pregnant, it’s best to steer clear from energy drinks. Any person, regardless of their health status, can be at risk of side effects of these beverages if too much is consumed or if they are consumed in association with alcohol. Finally, there is no place for energy drinks in the diet of a child or adolescent.
1. Draw a Venn Diagram on the back of this paper.
   * Label one side Red Bull and the other Telluride Medical Clinic.
   * Include at least 3 points for each side article- focus on what the author’s purpose and point of view on the topic of energy drinks.
   * In the center, give 2 examples of what the articles have in common.

2. How does the author, Diana Koeliker feel about the energy drinks? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

3. Multiple Choice:
   Based on your response to #2, How does Diana Koeliker develop her argument?
   
   a. by providing opinion based examples and personal anecdotes of how people have been hurt by using energy drinks.
   
   b. by making the point that everyone who uses energy drinks suffers harmful reactions.
   
   c. by listing problems and health concerns associated with the ingredients used in energy drinks.

4. How does Red Bull feel about their energy drinks? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

5. With your shoulder partner, write a 3 sentence summary of the Article #2 using textual evidence to PROVE your analysis.