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Need a Boost of Energy? Pass Up Energy Drinks

Energy drinks (Red Bull, Monster, 5-Hour Energy, etc.) have become popular to grab for a boost of energy. Ads claim that energy drinks can improve brain function, boost athletic performance, burn fat, produce a feeling of euphoria, and supply vitamins and minerals for energy production. Perhaps they do, but they also carry a risk of serious health problems.

That boost of energy from energy drinks usually comes in the form of caffeine. Caffeine works by blocking the effects of a brain chemical involved in sleep. It forces neurons in your brain to fire. This produces “emergency” signals in your brain, which then releases adrenaline. Adrenaline causes the heart to beat faster and induces the liver to release extra sugar into the bloodstream. The result of all these processes is a short boost of energy. **Here’s the catch: The increase in energy usually lasts thirty minutes or less and is followed by more than an hour of listlessness and drowsiness.**

Large amounts of caffeine found in energy drinks may make a person feel more alert and awake for a short time. However, consuming too much caffeine may result in insomnia, restlessness, dizziness, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, anxiety, nervousness, and irritability. The recommended daily allowance for caffeine is equivalent to two or three cups of coffee, four to five cans of soda, or one to two energy drinks.

Energy drinks are often loaded with sugar and an overdose of certain vitamins. Sugar contributes to weight gain and tooth decay. Check the nutrition label!

Instead of grabbing that energy drink to gain a short-lived boost of energy, try these tips to have continued energy throughout the day:

- Get seven to nine hours of restful sleep each night
- Drink lots of water
- Eat healthy foods that include a small portion of protein at each meal
- Don’t overload on caffeine
- Be active

When it comes to health, a quick and easy fix is never the best choice!