



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Excessive Consumption of Energy Drinks

Energy Drink Consumption and Its Association with Sleep Problems and Sleepiness Among Service Members on a Combat Deployment – Afghanistan, 2010

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Energy drinks are the latest rage these days, especially among young men. The drinks contain the caffeine equivalent of one to three cups of coffee or cans of soda, as well as other ingredients aimed at boosting energy. When used in excess, they can cause health problems.

Dr. Robin Toblin is a researcher at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and she's joining us today by telephone to discuss the dangers associated with excessive consumption of energy drinks. Welcome to the show, Robin.

[Dr. Toblin] Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Robin, how popular are energy drinks?

[Dr. Toblin] Well, the first energy drinks came on the US scene in 1997 and there's just been a huge growth in the last decade; it's been increasing every year. We know that last year, alone, there were nine billion dollars in sales and about half of college kids are drinking it at least once a month, and about six percent of young men are drinking it every day.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some of the ingredients in these drinks?

[Dr. Toblin] Well, caffeine's the main active ingredient. There's other ingredients, like herbal substances, B vitamins, sugars, you made have heard of taurine, but caffeine really is the main ingredient and that's what we're most worried about.

[Dr. Gaynes] What is a safe amount to drink?

[Dr. Toblin] Right now, the safety of these products isn't really known; they're not generally regulated by the FDA. So, like other caffeinated products, we'd say moderation is really important.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the health consequences of consuming energy drinks in excess?

[Dr. Toblin] Well, first of all, when you start drinking them, at that time, you're going to get dehydrated and maybe higher blood pressure. That night, you'll probably have difficulty sleeping. Even beyond that, there can be effects of withdrawal or even intoxication or overdose

at high levels. Ten to fifteen thousand emergency department visits are being seen each year for these energy drinks, and the FDA even reported deaths several weeks ago.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are there any adverse effects of these drinks once the ‘energy boost’ wears off?

[Dr. Toblin] Well, that’s the really interesting thing about these products. It actually has the opposite reaction. Like other caffeinated products, you become sleepier, once it wears off, and it actually increases the likelihood of falling asleep during the day, and that can just get in the way of your work performance and your day-to-day activities.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Robin. I’ve been talking today with Dr. Robin Toblin about the dangers of over consumption of energy drinks.

Remember, energy drinks should be consumed in moderation. Check with your health care provider if you’re experiencing negative side effects after consuming these products.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.