

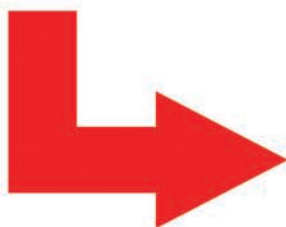
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Unique Monthly Visitors: 1,749,440

Men's Health



YOUR MOVE: For a caffeine-free boost, sip on FRS Healthy Energy drinks. They're free of folic acid and contain reasonable levels of the other B vitamins. What makes FRS effective is quercetin, an antioxidant that can help you fight fatigue during exercise, a 2010 University of South Carolina study found. Like caffeine, quercetin also blocks brain receptors for adenosine - a chemical that makes you sleepy - to make you feel energized, says study author Mark Davis, Ph.D.



RULES FOR ENERGY DRINKS

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

We've debunked taurine and guarana for years. But energy drink makers have found new ways to entice you. Don't be fooled

By Laura Roberson, Photographs by Travis Rathbone

AMERICA IS IN THE MIDST OF AN energy crisis. We're guzzling energy drinks and shots at record rates but feeling more lethargic than ever. Sales of these products have more than doubled in the past 5 years, with 35 percent of men ages 18 to 24 drinking them regularly, a new Mintel survey reveals.

"Guys create an up-and-down trap with energy drinks and with whatever they take at night to help slow down," says Matthew Edlund, M.D., author of *The Power of Rest*. "They never feel completely rested." Or, even scarier, they end up on a gurney in the ER. Hospital visits related to energy drinks have surged more than tenfold since 2005, reports the U.S. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. And most of those amped-up patients are men.

"Energy drinks emphasize vigor, power, all the things that appeal to men," says Cecile Marczynski, Ph.D., an assistant professor of psychology at Northern Kentucky University. Guys willingly swallow the bottled boosters' claims, when they should really be asking, "Why am I so damn tired?"

"We don't use our bodies the way they're built to be used," says Dr. Edlund. "We guzzle energy drinks and then can't sleep at night. We sit all day and then read e-mails at 3 a.m." It's no wonder we walk around like zombies—and treat these drinks like liquid life support. As sales and heart rates spike, it's a good time to question the trends and find healthier ways to power up.

ENERGY SPIKE 1

Decaf energy drinks

Marketers of energy drinks are clever—they remove a well-known, often worrisome compound and then tout the resulting drink as a "healthier" version of the original. The first vilified ingredient was sugar. Now it's caffeine. Hydrite and 5-Hour Energy have both unveiled decaf options. Makes sense: Some 38 percent of men who buy energy drinks now look for low caffeine content, the Mintel survey found. †

So what's the alleged alternate energy source? Most often, B vitamins. A decaf 5-Hour Energy shot, for example, packs several thousand times your daily recommended B12 and B6, plus 100 percent of your folic acid. But here's the thing: You won't feel a B-induced boost, since the energy provided by B vitamins isn't stimulating like caffeine. "They simply help extract energy from your food, and you need only a little bit," says Tod Cooperman, M.D., president of ConsumerLab.com, an independent tester of health and nutritional products. "The science is misused to lead people to believe that a megadose of B vitamins will somehow energize them. It won't."

Plus, if you eat fortified foods or take a multivitamin, energy shots could send you over the folic-acid edge—which in the long term, he warns, could raise your cancer risk.

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