



Highlights

Spring 2011

The Truth About Energy Drinks

By Marcus Maw, ATC

Walk into any grocery store or convenience store, or look in a vending machine, and you will see them. Energy drinks are everywhere. Adults, teenagers and even young kids can be seen drinking them. What do we know about them? Are they safe? Do they work the way the energy drink companies claim they do? Are they healthy? Here are the true facts about energy drinks.

ENERGY DRINKS VERSUS SPORTS DRINKS.

First and foremost, energy drinks should not be confused with sports drinks. Sports drinks are designed to help you replenish the loss of necessary electrolytes due to exercise. Electrolytes — potassium, sodium, and calcium — are the key ingredients in sports drinks. On the other hand, energy drinks have no purpose other than supposedly giving you energy. The key ingredient found in energy drinks is caffeine. Sports drinks are promoted by reputable



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athletes like Michael Jordan. Energy drinks are promoted by unknown athletes like Rick Thorne.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF ENERGY DRINKS IS TO MAKE MONEY.

The energy drink market is a \$10 billion-a-year industry, with youth and young adults being the main marketing target. When considering marketing schemes used by energy drink companies, the angler fish provides a good comparison. The angler fish lures its prey with a bright light. The prey can't say no and they become dinner for the angler fish. Consider some of the many captions energy drink companies use to entice youth to buy their product: "Formulated to hypnotize the mind, or "You'll need some energy to party," and "Party like a rock star."

You can buy more than 500 different energy drinks on the market. They are all bright, colorful, and attractive to youth. Varying packaging designs target different personalities. They appeal to everyone. The energy drink industry is not much different than the alcohol industry. In fact, they work together, using similar ploys to attract consumers when they are young — then they will have them for life.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ADDICTION. The brain has a timeline of development. At certain times during this development process, the brain is in a plasticity state, meaning it is susceptible to addictions. This is the reason the energy drink industry targets youth — their brains are

Energy drink companies lure their prey with flashy slogans and promises.

in this state. Once you are addicted to energy drinks, you will develop a need for more. You may become immune to the effects of energy drinks and need a bigger buzz. For some youth, this could lead to underage use of alcohol, which could lead to use of illegal drugs.

READ THE FINE PRINT. Take a look at the labels of energy drinks. You will find ingredients like caffeine, ginseng, ginko, guarana and tuarine. Most of these are natural substances, some of which are actually found in the body. The problem with these ingredients is they are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and the energy drink companies can put as much as they want in their product. Many consumers think the product is safe and will live up to its marketing claims when in reality it won't. In addition, energy drinks contain huge amounts of sugar.

The biggest key in consuming energy drinks is moderation. How much caffeine should you have? Health officials recommend no more than 100 mg of caffeine per day. An average 12 ounce soda contains 18 – 55 mgs of caffeine. A 12 oz cup of coffee contains 80 – 120 mgs of caffeine. A regular size red bull drink contains 91mgs of caffeine. A 16 oz can of Monster contains 160 mgs of caffeine. A 16 oz can of Wired contains 344 mgs of caffeine. That equals 11 cans of Coca Cola! Many youth are drinking multiple cans of energy drinks per day.

As with anything addictive, energy drinks have associated potential health risks, including abnormal heart rate, dehydration, weight gain, and even potential cardiac arrest or death. Another dangerous outcome associated with consuming energy drinks is "the crash." What does that mean? Basically, when you consume an energy drink, you are putting a large amount of

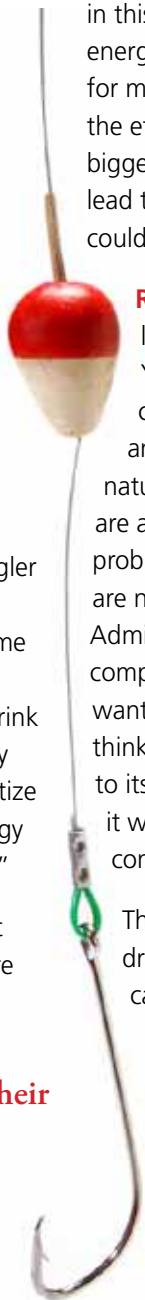
sugar and caffeine into your body at one time. This causes a spike in your blood sugar, which makes you feel good. This feeling is short lived as caffeine is a diuretic and will cause you to urinate more frequently, causing you to go from a high to a low very quickly. Drinking energy drinks frequently can cause a malfunction or irregular insulin metabolism in your body which can lead in turn to type II diabetes.

THE TRUTH. What is the truth about energy drinks? The truth is they aren't very good for you. They have no nutritional value, they do not give you long-term energy, they can cause harmful health issues, and they can lead to addiction to more serious substances like alcohol and illegal drugs.

The statement "moderation in all things" strictly applies to energy drinks. There is nothing wrong with having one every now and then, but many people are lured in by the traps the energy drink companies use.

STICK WITH WATER. Remember, the human body is 61 percent water. What we need to drink the most of and what will benefit us most is water — make it your drink of choice first and foremost.

(Special thanks to the Utah County Division of Substance Abuse and Prevention for content contribution.)



ENHANCING PERFORMANCE THROUGH REST AND NUTRITION

By Nathan Burnett, ATC

In the quest to improve athletic performance, we spend a lot of time focusing on training. Often, this is the part of performance preparation coaches are most familiar with and feel they can make the biggest difference. Two other parts of the performance triangle — rest and nutrition — may be more difficult to control or influence, but don't ignore them with your athletes.

REST

Rest is an often neglected aspect of training and may be viewed as less important than the others. Rest without training of course will not typically result in improved performance, but proper rest should not be disregarded. Sleep is time the body needs for repair and remodeling. Each individual may have slightly different needs, and you cannot control how much rest an athlete gets. This is something he or she has to take care of individually. Unfortunately,

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NEW IN 2011: UTAH CONCUSSION LAW

Concussion in sport is a current hot topic in the country and in the state of Utah. It is being talked about on ESPN, Sports Illustrated, and all over the internet.

The Utah State Legislature passed House Bill 204 this year, which limits the return to play ability of any athlete with a suspected concussion at all levels of organized sport, and requires a sports organization to adopt and enforce a concussion and head injury policy.

This bill was approved to better recognize and manage athletes with



suspected concussions, forcing them to be properly evaluated and treated.

Athletes with suspected concussion must be cleared by a qualified medical professional (licensed under

Title 58, Occupations and Professions of Utah, and be within their scope of practice). The athlete must also be trained in the management and care of concussions prior to returning to competition.

The Logan Regional Sports Medicine team of certified athletic trainers have been treating high school athletes in Cache Valley at this standard of care for more than seven years. If you

have any questions about this law, please talk with one of our athletic trainers, or call us at (435) 716-2880.



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many young athletes lack the discipline or time management skills to make sure they get adequate rest.

Many things interfere with proper rest and sleep: travel, anxiety, home life, school, work, social activities, and many other stressors. Some studies suggest high-school-age children need even more, but certainly athletes should receive at least eight to nine hours of sleep a night.

Some teams have team rules or curfews to try to manage this, but athletes must at some point see the value of adequate sleep as an important part of their training and learn to manage time accordingly.

NUTRITION

Students need to understand that diet and nutrition are ways to support their goals as athletes, not as the focus of training or as a means to achieve a particular body type. Athletes in each sport have success at every level despite not having what may be considered the “ideal” body.

Athletes need more energy to support their activities than the average person. However, many athletes function in a chronic state of energy deficit. Others may have plenty of calories, but lack proper nutrition and so are improperly nourished.

While eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia are more serious and often require professional help to address, a spectrum of disordered eating can affect athlete performance and overall health. Many athletes have more subtle variations of disordered eating and are never diagnosed or considered to have a problem. For example, athletes

may not be clinically diagnosed with bulimia or a binge-eating disorder because they do not binge or binge-purge at least twice a week; however, they may still binge occasionally and have disordered eating. Most athletes with disordered eating won't have dramatic changes in weight but may have an unhealthy relationship with food.

Signs that an athlete may have disordered eating include: frequent or obsessive weighing, eating little at team dinners, always worrying about body weight or ideal body image, or compulsively exercising. Athletes may use excessive exercise as a way of maintaining control or because they feel guilty about eating.

Coaches can play an important role in educating athletes about proper nutrition. Athletes should not use fad diets to lose or gain weight. Proper weight loss should be gradual and sustained and not due to dehydration or malnutrition. For most people, one to two pounds per week of weight gain or loss is adequate. Also, let your athletes know that occasionally having something just because it tastes good is okay. Don't encourage extremes, but rather promote common sense and a balanced diet. As a general recommendation, athletes need a diet high in carbohydrates, usually around 60–65 percent, then proteins, 20 percent, and fats, 15 percent. This will vary a bit among different sports and individuals. Unless an athlete has a severe allergy and/or has been instructed by

a physician or nutritionist to do so, nothing should be completely eliminated from the diet.

Encourage athletes not to skip meals, especially breakfast. They should eat regular meals and, if needed, eat healthy snacks or smaller but more frequent meals. In general, athletes — and all of us — should try to avoid foods high in fat or high in calories with no or little nutritional value. For example, occasional consumption of carbonated drinks, energy drinks, and caffeine may not negatively affect performance, but the daily or frequent use of such items does not benefit overall health and nutrition.

While coaches can't dictate exactly what their athletes will do, they can educate their teams and support healthier habits of rest and nutrition among the athletes. Overall, this will result in improved performance and establish healthier habits and lifestyles. 🌱

