



News and Trends

Energy Drinks + Alcohol = A Dangerous Mix

Highly-caffeinated energy drinks may pose a significant threat to individuals and public health, say researchers at the University of Maryland School of Public Health and Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

In an online commentary in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, researchers recommend immediate consumer action, education by health providers, voluntary disclosures by manufacturers, and new federal labeling requirements.

According to the researchers, the mixing of energy drinks and alcohol has become “enmeshed in the subculture of partying.” The JAMA paper goes on to state that the practice of mixing energy drinks with alcohol has been linked consistently to drinking high volumes of alcohol per drinking session (“binge drinking”) and subsequent serious alcohol-related consequences such as sexual assault and driving while intoxicated. Other harmful effects include violent vomiting, excessive drunkenness, and dehydration that often require emergency medical attention.

Additionally, energy drink use appears to be associated with alcohol dependence and other drug use. More research is needed to clarify the possible mechanisms underlying the associations that have been observed in research studies. The report recommends several “proactive steps to protect public health:”

- Health care professionals should inform their patients of the risks of consuming highly caffeinated energy drinks;
- Individuals should educate themselves about those risks;
- Manufacturers should warn consumers about the risks of mixing their products with alcohol;
- Regulatory agencies should require energy drink manufacturers to disclose caffeine content on product labels and display appropriate warnings.

For More Information visit <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/early/2011/01/21/jama.2011.109.full>.