

# SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY

## Dangers of Energy Drinks and Youth

Beverages that contain large amounts of caffeine are often called “energy drinks.” These drinks are mostly used to provide a boost of energy, such as waking up early for school, staying awake to complete homework, playing video games, and more. Although large amounts of caffeine are dangerous on their own, the other ingredients can also be harmful.

### What to Look For

The AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) suggests that children ages 12-18 ingest less than 100mg of caffeine daily. Most energy drinks on the market contain 100-200mg of caffeine each. For comparison, a standard twelve-ounce can of Coca-Cola contains 29mg.

Energy drinks can contain other stimulants, which are ingredients that raise activity in your body. Common ones include taurine, guarana, and L-carnitine. Large amounts of added sugar are common in energy drinks, which do not provide any dietary benefits but can contribute to weight gain and tooth decay.

### Packaging and Marketing

Companies that sell energy drinks use marketing to appeal to children. These beverages come in tasty flavors, pretty colors, and even promote their products with celebrities and athletes. It is important to see that these companies target youth to create long-term customers.

### Harmful Effects

Negative effects of energy drink use can include:

- Dehydration, which is not enough water in your body. This can lead to symptoms of headache, tiredness, high heart rate, low blood pressure, and dry mouth.
- Heart complications like an irregular heartbeat. These can lead to more serious issues such as stroke or heart failure.

- Anxiety symptoms often vary by person. It can include feeling nervous and jittery, trouble concentrating, nausea, and sweating.
- Insomnia/difficulty sleeping.
- Caffeine addiction can also happen. Addiction is when your body becomes dependent on caffeine from regular use. Caffeine withdrawal symptoms include headache, irritability, and low energy, among other things.

### What You Can Do

- Set a good example; do not consume energy drinks in front of children.
- Educate your children on the contents of energy drinks and the possible negative effects. It is possible you are their only source for this information.
- Talk to your children about why they are drinking energy drinks. If there is a particular reason, like tiredness, for example, come up with another solution for that issue.

### If You Need Help

If you have questions about energy drinks, contact a trusted adult, such as a coach or parent. Your medical doctor can also help with health questions.

GHS is here to help. For questions about services, call us at 810-257-3705.

For mental health emergencies, call us at 810-257-3740, 24 hours a day. TTY users call 810-232-6310.

