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Children should avoid energy drinks

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Highlight:

Health experts advise that children should not drink energy drinks because of various health concerns, including the drinks' high caffeine content, which can lead to sleeplessness, nervousness, elevated blood pressure and heart rate, and their high calorie content, which can contribute to childhood obesity.

Original source:

<http://www.wcfcourier.com/articles/2005/08/31/features/lifestyles/478c5db70e1b4a118625706e00468884.txt>

Summary:

- Red Bull, Amp, Adrenaline Rush, Lost Energy, Full Throttle and scores of other so-called energy drinks are a million-dollar market, padding the pockets of their makers and revving up the consumers who drink them.
- "As a physician, I don't recommend them for children," said Dr. Ronald Flory, a family practitioner at Covenant Clinic.
- A survey by an Australian consumer group showed 27 percent of 8- to 12-year-old boys, 12 percent of 8- to 12-year-old girls, 24 percent of 12- to 18-year-old boys and 20 percent of 12- to 18-year-old girls had had at least one energy drink in the two weeks prior to the survey.
- In the United States, where health officials are struggling with a growing childhood obesity epidemic, the calorie count in [energy drinks](#) amounts to more bad news.
- Hansen's Energy Pro packs 120 calories in its 8-ounce can.
- Caffeine does provide a quick energy boost, but it doesn't come without a cost, especially in children.
- "A can of Red Bull has two times the amount of caffeine as a can of Coke," said Lori Fincher, a dietitian at Allen Hospital.
- It gives them a quick, high buzz and makes them feel like they have all this energy."
- But caffeine also is a diuretic that can quickly rob kids of fluids, leaving them dehydrated, said Fincher.
- "It will enhance concentration and performance, but it can interfere with the appropriate fluid balance and enhances the chances of heart rhythm disturbance," said Flory.
- Combined with caffeine, ephedrine has been proven to cause deadly heart problems.
- High school officials in Burbank, Calif., banned energy drinks in 2000 when two student athletes who had consumed drinks with ephedrine fainted.
- Taurine, an ingredient which, at high levels, is said to boost the effects of stimulants, is a common ingredient in many energy drinks, as is guarana or extracts from its seeds, yet another source of caffeine.

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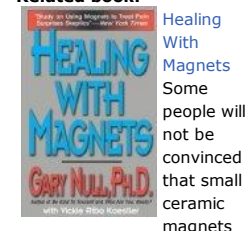
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