

Liquid Controversy

The Highs And Lows Of Energy Drinks

By Ricki Dugdale

Photos By Tom Kimmell



As a goalie, the last thing Steve Cash needs is a case of the shakes, especially when he's staring down an attacking forward.

Having pucks rifled at his head when he's seated inches off the ice is already enough to leave him shaking in his sled. He doesn't need to add to it by downing an energy drink minutes before hitting the ice.

"I don't drink energy drinks," says Cash, an 18-year-old goalie for the U.S. Sled Hockey Team. "I have, but I don't like it. It

kind of gives me the jitters."

Instead, sticking to a sport drink allows Cash to keep his eye on the puck.

"Before and after a game and between periods I drink Gatorade, and I'm more focused," he says. "I'm a lot smoother in my abilities, and I can see the puck better."

As kids are being constantly pushed beyond their limits in school and on the ice, energy drinks are slowly finding their way into the line up.

Much has been written about the effects

energy drinks have on people, especially the younger generations, and people are starting to take matters into their own hands.

Marketed around the phony promise to improve physical and mental performance, energy drinks appeal to an athlete's goal of being stronger, faster and better. Because youth sports are growing more competitive, energy drinks are seen as a means to gain that extra edge over the competition.

However, in the hands of kids, the ingredients found in most energy drinks, like caf-

feine and the herb guarana, can have dangerous effects.

That's why schools have begun banning energy drinks on campuses, while some convenience stores have refused to sell to minors. Some rinks are getting in on the act by not selling energy drinks at concession stands or in vending machines.

Coaches are also noticing the difference in their athletes on energy drinks.

"I get on my kids' cases because they are so up and down," says Dan Brennan, the coach of a Colorado Springs Midget AA team during the 2007-08 season. "Those drinks may be good for a quick boost, but halfway through the game they crash."

In addition to these rise-and-crash patterns, the combination of caffeine and caffeine-like herbs can cause abnormal heart rhythms. Exercise increases blood pressure, which causes the heart to work harder. Adding caffeine, which is a stimulant, forces the heart to work harder just to keep up.

Josh Holmes, a 17-year-old with the Mission Colorado Kodiaks inline team, recalls the jittery feeling that took over his body after drinking SoBe Adrenaline Rush.

"If it's a game where everyone is playing and I'm on the bench, I feel like I'm sitting still

but moving at the same time," Holmes says.

Although you may feel an extra burst of energy or feel as if you can play forever after a swig of an energy drink, that feeling wears off. Then you just feel tired and sluggish and sometimes sick.

"An hour after the game I'd be really tired and crash," Holmes says. "I've seen other players who drink Rockstar or Monster, and toward the end of the game they'll get tired."

Sports drinks such as Gatorade and PowerAde are the safer alternative to their caffeinated counterparts while offering similar results. Sports drinks also contain the vitamins, calories and electrolytes that an athlete needs in order to recover after an intense workout.

Still, too much of a good thing can be bad for you. Sports drinks are great for during or immediately after a game, but those extra calories can lead to weight gain if drank regularly outside of competition, while those juiced-up waters may provide more vitamins than should be consumed in a day.

"The best thing after a game is chocolate milk," Brennan says. "It has everything you need." ❖

Read The Label

If you want to minimize harm to yourself, make sure you read labels carefully and pay attention to the amount of ingredients you're consuming:

- Most energy drinks contain between 70 and 200 mg of caffeine. A full 16 oz. can of RockStar contains 200 mg of caffeine while a 12 oz. can of Coca-Cola contains 34 mg.

- The B vitamins are meant to work together and can cause serious side effects if taken alone in high doses.

- Ginkgo Biloba is safe when taken in doses under 240 mg.

- You don't need to supplement L-Carnitine, but if you have an irregular diet, you can take up to two to six grams without worry. Be sure it is L-Carnitine and not D-Carnitine, because your body can't use D-Carnitine.

Energy Drinks Got You Down?



Know the Downsides of Energy Drinks

- > Full of caffeine
- > Loaded with sugar
- > Cause dehydration
- > Energy crash
- > Upset stomach
- > Sleep problems
- > Jitteriness
- > Headaches
- > High cost
- > Not good for children
- > Bad for diabetics

Read the labels carefully and avoid them if they are high in caffeine and sugar.

Best Way to Get Ready For a Game

Eat a balanced meal a few hours before you take the ice and drink plenty of water so you are fully hydrated. Avoid high-sugar drinks like soda pop and energy drinks.

During the game or between periods you can drink a sport drink to help replace energy burned and water lost during the game.

Most importantly drink water and eat right so you are at the top of your game.

DO

- > Drink plenty of water
- > Eat a healthy meal
- > Get a good night's sleep
- > Visualize making plays

It's OK to drink a sports drink during or after a game to replace water and energy lost.

Remember energy drinks might give you a quick boost, but in the end it's not good for your game.

Roenick's

RX

When It Comes To Concussions, NHL Veteran Is The Voice Of Experience And Reason

By Ricki Dugdale

As a seasoned NHL player, Jeremy Roenick has experienced more than his fair share of concussions — at least 11 since he was 11-years-old — and he knows that they are no picnic in the park. He also knows that his next one could be his last.

He remembers one time when he was with the Chicago Blackhawks being knocked out during a game in Minnesota and waking up in the training room with no idea how he got there, and then playing the very next night.

"They let me play ... within a 24-hour span without any question of how I felt," recalls the 38-year-old Roenick. "Nowadays they sit you out for at least a week."

Hockey has made great strides when it comes to diagnosing and treating concussions. But, as Roenick points out, there is still a long way to go.

It starts with changing the mindset that playing through the hazy pain of a concussion is the macho thing to do. Acting like the tough guy when it comes to concussions only makes the injury worse. As a tough guy himself, Roenick can attest that rest is the only way to combat the effects of a concussion.

"Just to relax and not to do anything for about seven to 10 days," says Roenick, who is preparing for his 20th NHL season and second with the San Jose Sharks.

"Don't do anything that could raise your blood pressure. You don't want to have a situation where you're going to have a lot of blood that's rushing into your brain when you've had trauma like that."

