

# Energy Drinks

Energy drinks contain as much or more added sugar than cola, are high or very high in caffeine, and often contain potentially harmful additives. Energy drinks are often marketed with images of extreme sports such as competitive downhill skiing, biking, snowboarding and skateboarding, with the implication that these drinks boost performance. Others, with flashy packaging and enticing names are designed to directly target the youth market.

Energy drinks are very high not only in sugar, but also in caffeine. For example, 1 500 mL can of a typical energy drink contains 160 mg of caffeine. That is more than double the suggested daily caffeine maximum for a 7-12 year-old child.

The table below compares the caffeine content in pop and coffee to that of some common brands of energy drinks:

Product	Caffeine Content
Can of Cola (355 mL)	35 mg
Coffee House Grande Latte	70 mg
Canned Energy Drink (500 mL)	160 mg



Many energy drinks also contain stimulant herbs or other substances such as guarana and taurine. These additives are often listed misleadingly as “medicinal ingredients” on energy drinks, when in fact they are untested and potentially harmful, especially for children. Like sports drinks, energy drinks also tend to contain artificial flavours and/or colours.

When consumed in large amounts, or when combined with alcohol, energy drinks have been linked to serious health effects such as irregular heart function, nausea and vomiting, and electrolyte disturbances. Energy drinks can also interact with some medications.

## References

HealthLinkBC, *Energy Drinks*, February 2015