Why Doesn’t Ben Greenfield Approve of Energy Drinks?

Photo Courtesy of Ben Greenfield
I Don’t Approve of Energy Drinks

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Imagine this: I am writing this article in a magazine that features an energy drink!

I’m not a big fan of energy drinks. As a nutrition consultant, for the sake of my clients, I have sometimes wished that energy drinks did not exist. Here are the reasons why:

1. Danger of Caffeine Overdose and Addiction

The average energy drink contains nearly 4 times the amount of caffeine found in commercial soda beverages. Several of the more popular brands contain the caffeine equivalent of 14 Cokes. A 6-ounce cup of coffee has 80-150 milligrams (mg) of caffeine, but the caffeine content of energy drinks ranges from 50-500+ mg. One popular energy drink “shot” tops out at 570mg, giving you the equivalent of about three and a half cups of coffee with a single sip!

Why should this concern you? Because caffeine forces your adrenal glands to secrete enormous amounts of adrenaline and “energy” hormones, even when those glands are depleted. The result is a growing tolerance to the effects of caffeine, and eventual burn-out and severe adrenal depletion. This is accompanied by a feeling of increasing tiredness and a need for higher and higher amounts of caffeine to achieve an energy boost. Attempts at quitting the addiction can result in withdrawal symptoms such as severe headaches and complete loss of mental focus and function.

In addition, by inhibiting the activity of the vitamin folate, B12 and B6, high levels of caffeine may interfere with your body’s ability to regulate two significant cardiovascular disease risk factors: homocysteine and cholesterol. By causing blood vessel constriction and increased risk of blood clots, the caffeine content in some energy drinks can literally be deadly for someone with high stress levels or high blood pressure.

Finally, high levels of caffeine consumption have been associated with increased risk of stroke and arthritis, insomnia, heart palpitations, tremors, sweating, nausea, diarrhea, chest pain, and neurological symptoms!

2. Overdosing on Sugar and Artificial Sweeteners

One can of a typical energy drink contains the equivalent of nearly 10 teaspoons of sugar! This amount of sugar causes your sensitive pancreas to generate a literal flood of insulin in an attempt to manage all the extra glucose (sugar) that ends up in the bloodstream.

Some of this sugar may be used by the muscles, but usually only if you are exercising quite frequently. The remainder of the sugar is converted into fat by the liver. In addition, the body releases both epinephrine and cortisol from your adrenal glands (as if they weren’t already stressed enough from the caffeine!).

The result is a quick swing in energy, followed by a subsequent crash, a severely compromised immune system, a surge of cell-damaging “free radicals,” thickened blood and an eventual insensitivity to insulin. This is also known as Type II Diabetes. And you thought sugar was bad for just your teeth!

But what about artificial sweeteners? Don’t they eliminate this problem? Unfortunately, research has shown that there is still a release of gastric hormones when you consume an artificial sweetener. This sends your brain a confusing message: that food is present, but that the food has no “substance” or “calories.” As a result, you develop an appetite craving typically 30-60 minutes after consuming an artificially sweetened beverage.

In addition, these artificially sweetened chemicals (yes, chemicals!) such as aspartame (NutraSweet), sucralose (Splenda), acesulfame potassium, and sugar alcohols have been linked to upset stomachs, mood swings, birth defects, cancer, diabetes, emotional disorders, epilepsy, seizures, a variety of neurological disorders and even obesity!

3. Excessive Acids

Finally, carbonic acid, citric acid and phosphoric acid in popular carbonated energy drinks can dissolve tooth enamel (causing tooth rot and yellow teeth), raise the risk of stomach damage and ulcers, cause bone breakdown, osteoporosis, and bone fractures, and upset the fragile “acid-alkaline” balance in the human body.

And that is why I am not a fan of energy drinks.

But two years ago, a friend gave me a packet of powder called “delta-E.” Of course, I immediately took note of the fact that it was not in carbonated and acidic soda form. It was an effervescent powder that I could mix with pure, natural water!

Upon an inspection of the label, however, I noted that it only contained 75mg of caffeine—the equivalent of just one-half cup of coffee. Sure, it wouldn’t destroy my adrenal glands, but how could this possibly enhance my energy levels?
And with no processed sugar and artificial sweeteners, would I even be able to stomach the taste?

Despite my doubts, I emptied the little pink packet into a bottle of water. After a surprisingly delicious, fruity swig, I anticipated the same feeling that I had previously experienced with commercial energy drinks—jitteriness, lack of focus, a short-lived high, then a massive slump in energy levels and enormous stimulation of appetite.

My expectations were wrong. For the next 4 hours, I had a laser focus, a positive mood, and completely enhanced energy levels—without the jitters!

Upon researching this unique feeling, I discovered that it was due to the presence of pure L-Theanine in delta-E.

It had actually crossed my blood-brain barrier and caused a release of mood-enhancing dopamine and serotonin, without destroying my adrenal glands in the process!

With a full spectrum of immune-system enhancing vitamin C, cellular metabolism-boosting vitamin B12, the muscle-exciting amino acid taurine and a delicious pomegranate juice extract as a natural sweetener, I was suddenly finding my paradigm challenged—was there actually such a thing as a “healthy” energy drink? Absolutely!

Using delta-E Really Helps Me!

For the past two years, I have used delta-E to achieve that same welcome feeling over and over again. There has been no “tolerance build-up,” afternoon energy slump, or compromised immune system. Perhaps even more impressively, I doubled up on delta-E prior to intense competition in the Ironman triathlon and experienced the greatest athletic success of my life!

As a nutrition consultant and personal trainer, I have utilized delta-E to “wean” clients from caffeine addictions, enhance sleep levels and assist with insomnia. I also use it for inspiration and energy to help me complete a fat-burning workout after a long day of work and to boost my immune system prior to airplane travel.

And I must say, I’m still not a fan of energy drinks—but delta-E is not an energy drink.

It was not formulated to be a sleep substitute, to satisfy a caffeine addiction, or to fuel late-night partying.

Just like all the IMPaX products, it was formulated from the perspective of complete mental and physical health. Because of that, delta-E is unique and stands above the crowd of typical energy alternatives.

Try it. I think you’ll agree.