

# Cracked-up Crackerjacks: To caffeinate, or not to caffeinate?

By ACSH Staff — November 19, 2012

It's not often hardly ever that we at the American Council on Science and Health agree with a public stance by the food police at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. But our Dr. Josh Bloom did just that at our Dispatch meeting this morning. (Traitor!)

It's all to do with this [new caffeinated version](#) [1] of Cracker Jacks that Frito Lay is introducing, called Cracker Jack D. CSPI has asked the Food and Drug Administration to look into the new snack because they contain about 70 milligrams of caffeine in each 2-ounce package; the group says it's concerned about the growing trend of adding caffeine to a wide range of products, including jelly beans and powdered drink mix.

I happen to agree with them actually, Dr. Bloom says. Why should anyone be adding caffeine to any kid's treat? It's a powerful stimulant which is also a drug.



Frito Lay says the snacks will be marketed to

adults, not children. "The package design and appearance are wholly different from Cracker Jack to ensure there is no confusion among consumers, spokesman Chris Kuechenmeister [told](#) [2] *The Boston Globe*.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross says even if that's true, which he strongly doubts, kids will undoubtedly be the major market for this product. But there's nothing stopping children from drinking coffee and cola drinks with caffeine, he points out. If a company wants to market and identify a product as having caffeine in it, I don't think we should target it merely because it has that fairly mild stimulant, Dr. Ross says, noting that other products like Jelly Belly's extreme sports beans are also caffeinated.

You shouldn't be putting drugs in kids' candy. Period. Dr. Bloom says. I'm pretty libertarian, but this is a cynical attempt to capitalize on the [absurd energy drink fad](#) [3]. He adds, Jelly Belly is now selling sport beans that are gluten free. As if that's supposed to make them healthy. Please. I

couldn't come up with a more disingenuous marketing campaign if I had Bernie Madoff standing over my shoulder.

Still, Dr. Ross worries, Where do you draw the line when it comes to forbidding companies from caffeinating their products. (The *Dispatch* meeting is typically held over morning coffee, we should acknowledge).

So we ask our readers what do you think? Weigh in with your your comments, either by writing on our blog or sending them to [morning@acsh.org](mailto:morning@acsh.org) [4], and we'll share them with everyone tomorrow.

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/cracker-jacks-caffeine-sparks-outrage-health-group-article-1.1203251>

[2] <http://bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/health-wellness/2012/11/19/would-you-eat-caffeinated-cracker-jacks/KMpfR42vO5QyOD0OnZc45K/story.html>

[3] <http://www.medicalprogressstoday.com/2012/10/red-bull-%20-%20-%20-%20.php>

[4] <mailto:morning@acsh.org>