

Combining alcohol and energy drinks may result in increased alcohol consumption

By ACSH Staff — July 18, 2014



A few years ago, the FDA [mandated that](#) ^[1] four companies

remove their alcoholic energy drinks from the market after concluding that the products were unsafe and illegal. Now, a [group of researchers](#) ^[2] at the Australian National University's Centre for Research on Ageing, Health and Well-being are studying the effects of combining alcohol and energy drinks. They found this combination results in a stronger urge to drink and may possibly increase binge drinking.

Researchers conducted a double-blind randomized study on 75 participants ages 18 to 30, essentially a lab party. Participants were given either a cocktail containing a combination of vodka, energy drink and fruit drink or a cocktail containing vodka, soda water and fruit drink. Participants completed an Alcohol Urge Questionnaire before consuming the drink as well as 20 minutes following consumption. They were also given a breath alcohol concentration test. Researchers found that the urge to drink increased the most in those individuals given the energy drink/alcohol combination.

Rebecca McKetin, a fellow at the Australian National University's Centre for Research on Ageing, Health and Well-being says, This would mean that someone who drinks A+EDs [alcohol plus energy drinks] would want to keep drinking more than their friends who don't. And Peter G. Miller, associate professor of psychology at Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus in Australia adds, A greater urge to drink has substantial implications when we think about the nature of drinking episodes. Of course, the drunker you get, the more likely you are to get injured, be a victim or perpetrator of an assault, or even drive home while drunk, let alone making bad choices about the people you associate with and possible sexual behavior.

ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan says, Consuming too much caffeine on its own can [cause numerous](#) ^[3] side effects such as tremor, nausea, frequent urination and in rare cases, convulsions, as we have discussed before although such a dose of caffeine is difficult to obtain from commonly-

imbibed beverages such as coffee and soda, thankfully. However, combining this with alcohol adds a host of other complications as well. It is important that individuals understand the implications of consuming combined alcohol and energy drinks before they make the decision to do so.

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Links

[1] <http://acsh.org/2010/11/fda-cracks-down-on-caffeine-alcohol-beverages/>

[2] <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/combining-alcohol-energy-drinks-crave-alcohol-study-article-1.1871814>

[3] <http://acsh.org/2011/06/sweet-but-not-wired-sports-drinks-okay-for-most-kids-but-watch-the-caffeinated-energy-drinks/>