

# The Effects of Energy Drinks

Lots of children, young people and adults enjoy energy drinks. These fruity, fizzy drinks are available in an astounding range of weird and wonderful flavours and they promise to deliver that extra energy boost to help you get through a busy day. As with many treats, energy drinks are fine in moderation, but it's important to be mindful of how much you are drinking. Let's have a look at how these energy drinks affect our brains and bodies.

## Quick Facts

Caffeine: 80mg to 300mg

Sugar: up to 50g

Age: over-16s only



## What are the effects of caffeine?

Within around 10 minutes of drinking an energy drink, the caffeine within will begin to enter your bloodstream, raising your heart rate and your blood pressure. As more caffeine enters your blood, you will begin to feel more alert and focussed, as the caffeine blocks the chemical in your brain that sends messages from our body that we are tired.

After this initial period of caffeine in your bloodstream, the effects will begin to wear off, usually after around an hour. You will begin to experience a caffeine crash, which means you will start feeling tired and sluggish again.

## What are the effects of sugar?

Did you know that non-diet energy drinks often contain almost three times the amount of sugar as a standard soft drink? After the caffeine from an energy drink has been absorbed into your bloodstream, the sugar begins to enter your bloodstream too. As your blood sugar levels rise, an organ called the pancreas begins to produce insulin, which helps your body to turn the sugar into energy. If that energy doesn't get used up, it is stored as fat.

Similar to a caffeine crash, you may also start to experience a sugar crash with excess feelings of tiredness.

## Health Risks

There's a reason why energy drinks are only allowed to be sold to people aged sixteen or over in the UK. Did you know that around 12 hours after consuming an energy drink, your brain actually starts to have withdrawal symptoms? You might get headaches and feel more irritable than usual. Having too many energy drinks can also lead to increased risk of problems such as anxiety, dehydration and increased heart rate.



## Pros of Energy Drinks

- Quick boost of energy
- Lots of flavours to choose from

## Cons of Energy Drinks

- Lots of sugar and caffeine
- Can lead to health problems

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.

# Questions

1. In the introduction, what phrase does the writer use to make energy drinks sound desirable?  

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2. How much caffeine does an energy drink usually contain?  

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3. What happens within 10 minutes of drinking an energy drink?  

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4. How does caffeine stop you from feeling tired?  

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5. Why do you think the writer wrote this article?  

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6. How much sugar does an energy drink contain compared to a soft drink?  

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7. What does insulin do to sugar in your body?  

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8. What do you think people could do to feel alert, instead of having an energy drink?  

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9. Why do you think only over-16s can buy energy drinks?  

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10. Summarise the information in this report in less than 25 words.  

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# Answers

1. In the introduction, what phrase does the writer use to make energy drinks sound desirable?  
**Astounding range of weird and wonderful flavours.**
2. How much caffeine does an energy drink usually contain?  
**80mg to 500mg.**
3. What happens within 10 minutes of drinking an energy drink?  
**Caffeine gets absorbed into your bloodstream and raises your heart rate and blood pressure.**
4. How does caffeine stop you from feeling tired?  
**It blocks the chemical that tells your brain that you are tired.**
5. Why do you think the writer wrote this article?  
**To make sure people know the effects of energy drinks before they drink them.**
6. How much sugar does an energy drink contain compared to a soft drink?  
**Almost three times as much sugar.**
7. What does insulin do to sugar in your body?  
**Insulin helps turn sugar into energy. If the energy isn't used, it is stored as fat.**
8. What do you think people could do to feel alert, instead of having an energy drink?  
**Do some exercise, wake up earlier, drink some cold water.**
9. Why do you think only over-16s can buy energy drinks?  
**Any appropriate answer, eg. so they are aware of the effects.**
10. Summarise the information in this report in less than 25 words.  
**Any appropriate answer.**