

Mixing Alcohol and Energy Drinks¹

The background:

Energy drinks are a multi-billion dollar youth market! More than 2 of 3 nonalcoholic energy drinks are consumed by teenagers and young adults. Youth between the ages of 12 and 17 consume 31% of these drinks, and those between 18 and 24 consume 34%.

Since 2006, the alcohol industry has spent billions on grassroots advertising to promote the mixing of alcohol and energy drinks. They have also developed over 1500 different alcoholic energy drinks targeted to young drinkers.

State attorney generals recently filed a lawsuit against major alcohol companies for targeting youth with their energy drink products. The lawsuit, combined with other youth and community efforts, resulted in two major alcohol companies choosing to pull their products from the shelves.

Many pre-mixed alcoholic energy drinks are still promoted and available. Our communities face a host of lasting effects of the promotion and popularity of these mixed drinks among young drinkers.

The health and safety facts:

Mixing alcohol with energy drinks is a very dangerous combination, especially for youth. Alcohol is a leading cause of death and injury for youth. It's impact ranges from driving under the influence of alcohol, sexual assault, alcohol poisoning, and suicide to impact on family and friend relationships, school performance, and psychological health. Studies show that youth who mix alcohol and energy drinks are significantly more likely to experience these consequences.

Alcoholic energy drinks are a major risk factor for binge drinking behavior. These drinks designed for quick consumption. And because of their high concentration of caffeine and other stimulants and sugars, energy drinks often disguise the taste of alcohol and its effects.

Find out more:

Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center www.udetc.org

The Marin Institute www.marininstitute.org

¹ Sources: The Marin Institute. (2007). Alcohol, energy drinks, and youth: A dangerous combination. San Rafael, CA: Author; O'Brien, et. al. (2008). Caffeinated cocktails: Energy drink consumption, high-risk drinking, and alcohol related consequences among college students. Society for Academic Emergency Medicine.