

**Main Office**  
8790 Manchester Road  
St. Louis, MO 63144  
(314) 962-3456



**Branch Office**  
1723 Pennsylvania Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
(314) 664-7550

## **COMBINING ALCOHOL & ENERGY DRINKS**



A common problem among college students and teens is mixing energy drinks with alcohol, a potentially dangerous combination.

Mixing powerful stimulants contained in some energy drinks with depressants in alcohol could cause cardiopulmonary or cardiovascular failures, said David Pearson, a researcher in the Human Performance Laboratory. "It is scary to think that these energy drinks are being used as a mixer with vodka and whiskey," he said. "You are just overloading the body with heavy stimulants and heavy depressants."

David Pearson, coordinator of exercise science programs, is the author of "Ask Dr. Dave," a column for MH-18 magazine and MH-18.com, its online version. The publications are a spin-off of Men's Health from Rodale Press and are aimed at male teens. "I think we are going down the same road as when people drink alcohol and ingest ecstasy and other types of designed drugs," he said. "Some people physically cannot take the combination."

Energy drinks are a popular fad among America's youth culture. With names like Venom, Whoopass, Red Bull, and Adrenaline Rush, energy drinks are being sold by the millions to people looking for a quick boost of energy.

Most energy drinks contain large doses of caffeine and other legal stimulants, including ephedrine, guarana, taurine, and ginseng. Such drinks are being marketed to people 30 and younger. "There is a feeling of empowerment after a person drinks one of these," Pearson said. "It is a real big wallop of legal stimulants. The effects can last up to 12 hours." Little research has been done to determine if energy drinks are helpful or harmful. The NCAA and some professional sports leagues have banned such stimulants," Pearson said.

"Because they are legal and sold over the counter, just like cans of pop, kids who have been raised on caffeine-based drinks think that they are perfectly fine," he said. "We have learned that caffeine can have negative effects by causing a decline in the body's immune system."

*Information provided by TREND (Turning Resources & Energy in New Directions) 314-962-3456 or 800-666-5124.  
Reprinted from Higher ED AOD Prevention Digest, 11/01, Vol. 01:235. Reviewed by NCADA 1/07*