



## KIDS AND CAFFEINE DON'T MIX

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You can walk into any store in America and find a selection of energy shots, gums and candy, all with added caffeine, but without a clear statement regarding the caffeine content, or if the product is appropriate for children. You may have even bought one for yourself, or maybe you bought one for your child or one of your athletes. Unfortunately, most people don't investigate the ingredients on the label or the claims by the manufacturer. If you knew how much caffeine was in one of these products or what pediatricians overwhelmingly think regarding kids and caffeine, would you give it to a child before a competition?

The most popular products in the “enhanced-energy” category are energy shots. Energy shots come in two or three-ounce servings and commonly have caffeine, B-vitamins, and taurine as their main ingredients. The shots are generally sugar free and contain more caffeine than an eight ounce cup of coffee. An independent study of 5-Hour Energy by ConsumerLab.com found one shot had 207 milligrams of caffeine, compared to 180 milligrams of caffeine in an eight-ounce cup of coffee from Starbuck's. Coke's NOS Power Shot has 125 milligrams of caffeine; Rockstar Energy Shot has 200 milligrams, and a twelve-ounce can of Coke has 35 milligrams. Supplement manufacturers are also producing gum and candy with added caffeine. Extreme Sport Beans, which look and taste like Jelly Beans, contain 50 mg of caffeine in every 100 calorie package.

What about the other ingredients in the caffeine-enhanced products? According to experts, some are reason for concern, and others seem not to serve a legitimate purpose. Guarana, which is listed on the label of many shots, is a plant that produces caffeine. Obviously this is a concern in products that already list caffeine as an ingredient. B-vitamins, like B-12 and B-6 serve a purpose, but not as an energy boost, unless you have a Vitamin B deficiency.

Energy-enhanced products are a billion-dollar-a-year portion of the supplement industry; they are formulated for adults; and according to pediatricians, not intended for children. Not at home, in school or during an athletic competition. The risk of a seizure or heightened anxiety in a child should send a clear signal to parents and coaches; energy-enhanced products are only suitable for adults who are capable of understanding the risks and willing to accept the possible hazards associated with using such a product.

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Works Cited