

## Energy boosters?

Energy drinks in various formulations are the new flavor of the world, which are being consumed by sportsman and by young and old people with great relish. Concern about energy drinks has been gathering pace, with some groups warranting more strict regulation regarding their contents, potential side effects, and risk of addiction.

Although their history dates back to the early 1900s, energy drinks started coming into vogue in the 1970s and 1980s as stamina-enhancing products sought by people who wanted to enhance physical strength and vitality. Moreover, the consumption of these drinks became a fashion or trend set by the more affluent members of society and thereafter, they were advertised as health-promoting drinks. Energy drinks are soft drinks (nonalcoholic beverages) masked as energy boosters. The marketing accompanying these drinks often does not reveal the amount of sugars they contain, but stresses other ingredients such as stimulants, vitamins, and herbal extracts.

If energy drinks are not necessarily supplying us with energy, what is their appeal? The answer is caffeine—a great stimulant which absorbs and assimilates intoxicating effect on the brain, and that is where the concern arises. Excess use of caffeine, particularly by young people, can lead to some unpleasant and dangerous symptoms. There is also evidence that energy drinks may also stimulate substance abuse. Researchers suggest that the labeling and aggressive marketing of some energy drinks, particularly toward young generation, could lead to increased incidence of caffeine dependence. As a stimulant, caffeine which is present in a number of drinks has been linked to health benefits and also to detrimental effects. These drinks play havoc to oral



health because of the presence of phosphoric acid, inducing low oral pH along with the additive sugars, all of which cause dissolution of tooth structure.

Teeth are the strongest structure in the human body. If these ingredients can cause dissolution of this structure, then one can imagine the havoc it can play with the gastric mucosa on frequent consumption. The health professionals are currently struggling to enlighten people worldwide about the detrimental effects of soft drink consumption, especially among children. This task is uphill against the impregnable aura, grip, and misleading facts that these soft drink manufacturers have been promoting to the masses ever since their evolution.

And now, another challenge confronts us in the garb of these energy boosters.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. G. Damle', written over a horizontal line.

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