How Energy Drinks Harm Mental Health Transcript

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Introduction to Energy Drinks

This one drink has caused psychosis, hypomania, mania and or depression in my patients. Hey, I'm Dr. Uma Naidu. I am a Harvard nutritional psychiatrist and I wanted to tell you today about energy drinks, a question I get all the time.

Now energy drinks are popular beverages that claim to boost energy, alertness and physical or mental performance. They usually contain caffeine, refined sugars, B vitamins and other ingredients like taurine or guarana.

But even though those may be healthy ingredients, the earlier ones like caffeine and sugar are less healthy. How do energy drink affect the nervous system and mood?

The main active ingredient in most energy drinks is caffeine.

Caffeine and Sugar Effects

Caffeine is a stimulant, which means it speeds up the brain and body. After drinking an energy drink, people often feel more awake, alert and energetic for a short time.

However, these effects can be followed by side effects such as feeling jittery, anxious, restless or having trouble sleeping. They also experience headaches, stomach upset or fast heartbeat.

Well, what about the sugar content? Many energy drinks contain a lot of sugar, sometimes more than the recommended daily amount in just one can. Sugar can give a quick burst of energy, but this is often followed by a crash, which can make people feel irritable, tired or very moody.

Regularly drinking these sugary energy drink can also lead to weight gain, dental problems and the increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Now you may ask, do energy drinks offer any nutritional benefit?

Energy drinks may contain B vitamins and other nutrients but usually these are not needed if a person eats a balanced diet and they are often used more for marketing than for anything else.

Does this mean they're bad? No. Those added vitamins may be good for your body but guess what? They are masked by the high caffeine and high sugar in these drinks.

The main effects of energy drinks come from caffeine or sugar, not from the vitamins or other ingredients. There is no evidence that energy drinks provide any real health or nutritional benefit, and they are not recommended as a way to improve nutrition.

Now, are there risks for people with mood disorders like bipolar disorder? People with Mood Disorders like Bipolar Disorder may be more sensitive to the effects of caffeine in energy drink.

Limited Nutritional Value

There are reports that Energy drinks can trigger manic or depressive episodes in some people especially if consumed in large amounts or over several days.

Energy drinks can also worsen anxiety and sleep problems and mood swings in people with or without a history of mental health issues. Now what about teens and young adults?

Energy Drinks are especially popular among teenagers and adults. However, these groups are also at higher risk for the negative effects, including poor sleep increased stress, depression and even thoughts of self-harm or suicide if energy drinks are consumed too often, and there's research behind this.

The American College of Sports Medicine and other experts recommend that children and teenagers avoid energy drink.

Mood Disorder Risks

What are some key points to remember? Energy drinks can make people feel more alert for a short time, but they may also cause anxiety and sleep problems, as well as mood swings.

The sugar in energy drinks can lead to a quick energy boost but followed by a crash and regular use can cause health problems. There's no meaningful nutritional benefit to drinking energy drink if a person eats a healthy, balanced, whole foods diet.

People with mood disorders such as bipolar disorder or depression may be at higher risk for negative effects, including triggering a manic or depressive episode.

Children and teens and people with certain health conditions should avoid energy drinks. Now the stimulant effect of energy drink affects one's nervous system and mood.

Caffeine, which antagonizes adenosine receptors leading to increased alertness, reduced fatigue and improved reaction time. These effects are dose dependent with benefits most pronounced at caffeine doses of greater than and equal to 3 mg per kilogram of body weight.

However, adverse neurological and psychiatric effects, including anxiety, agitation, poor sleep and psychomotor disturbances are frequently reported, especially in children, adolescents and caffeine-naive individuals.

The American College of Sports Medicine highlights that neurological and psychiatric adverse events are among the most common with energy drink use.

Risks for Teens and Young Adults

So chronic or frequent consumption of sugar-sweetened energy drinks is associated with increased risk of stress, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

particularly in adolescents and young adults. Animal studies suggest that the combination of caffeine and sugar may exacerbate anxiety-like behaviors and promote emotional and cognitive alterations compared to sugar alone.

Both caffeine and sugar contribute to the rewarding properties and potential for repeated use of these energy drinks. But regular intake of high sugary drinks with a lot of caffeine is consistently linked to poor metabolic and psychiatric outcomes.

So please look at energy drink for the caffeine & sugar content when assessing the risk. Energy drinks acutely enhance alertness and mood via central nervous system stimulation, but they also elevate blood sugar.

Key Takeaways on Health Effects

When frequently used, the excessive intake is associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression and neuropsychiatric disturbances, especially in youth.

Individuals with mood disorders, including bipolar disorder, may be more susceptible to adverse psychiatric effects from energy drinks and caffeine. Things that can happen include triggering manic and depressive episodes, a

relapse of psychosis or exacerbation of mood symptoms.

Clinical observations and case reports document manic or depressive relapses in bipolar patients following periods of excessive energy drink consumption, with some cases involving daily intake of multiple cans over a week.

Acute or excessive caffeine intake from energy drinks can induce or worsen mania, hypomania anxiety and sleep disruption, all of which may destabilize mood in vulnerable individuals.

Caffeine, Sleep, and Psychiatric Symptoms

High episodic consumption, especially above 200 mg of caffeine per occasion, is associated with increased risk of psychiatric symptoms, including agitation and insomnia.

Sleep disruption is a key mediator of negative mood effects. Caffeine intake is associate with shorter sleep duration, which in turn predicts next day increases in depressive and hypomanic symptoms.

Recent longitudinal data suggests that these effects are not necessarily more pronounced in those with bipolar spectrum disorders compared to controls, although case reports and clinical observations indicate a potential risk for mood destabilization in this population.

In summary, the stimulant effects of energy drinks can potentially trigger dangerous mood elevations or exacerbate symptoms in people with mood disorders, particularly with high acute intake, but the magnitude or risk compared to the general population remains uncertain due to limited prospective data.

So in summary, while energy drinks on occasion once in a while may be somewhat okay, I would not recommend drinking these on any regular basis. and especially not if you have been diagnosed with a mental health condition such as bipolar disorder, hypomania, psychosis or even depression.