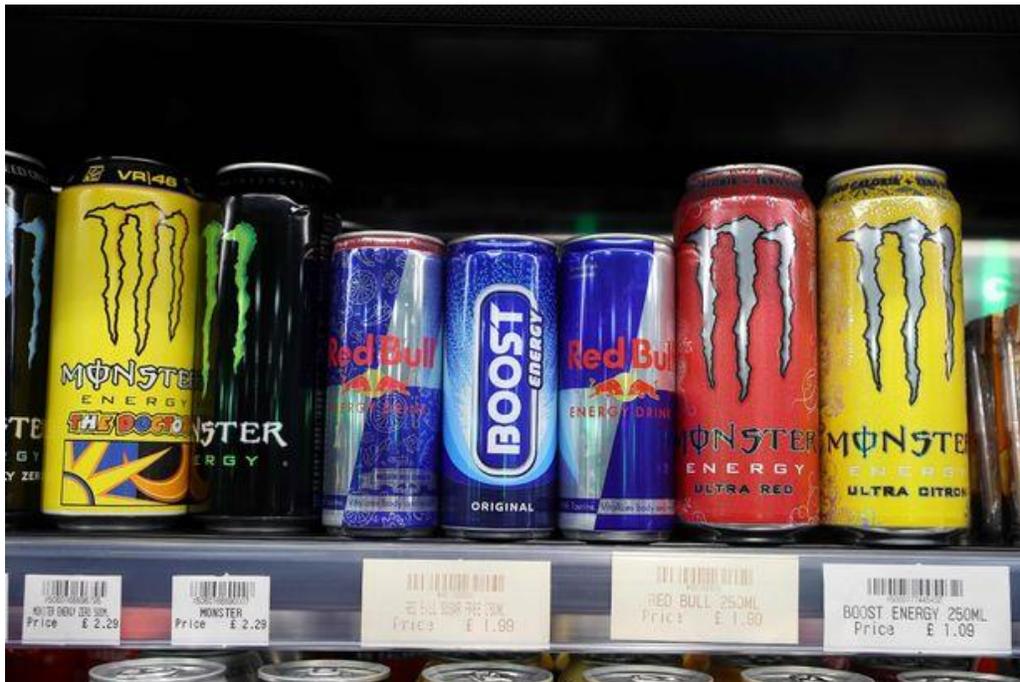


# Energy drink health consequences revealed in horrifying new scientific study

- Lead researcher Dr John Higgins, of the University of Texas Health Science Centre in Houston in the US, said this suggested “acute impairment in vascular function”.
- Researchers found the popular drinks, which are packed with caffeine and sugar, can cause blood vessels to contract and make strokes more likely. 6 NOV 2018



Downing one-and-a-half large cans of energy drink almost halves blood flow in young adults, a study suggests.

Researchers found the beverages – laden with caffeine and sugar, and popular with children – may lead to vessels contracting.

The narrowing of certain arteries over time can lead to a stroke.

In the small study, 44 non-smoking students in their 20s had blood vessels tested before and 90 minutes after consuming one-and-a-half 500ml cans of energy drink.

**At first, vessel dilation was 5.1% in diameter on average. It fell to 2.8% when measured the second time.**

The drinks have previously been linked to health problems associated with the heart. Caffeine can cause blood vessel walls to contract.

The drinks can contain 160mg of caffeine, despite 105mg being the safe daily limit for 11-year-olds.

## WebMD Study: Energy Drink Might Harm Blood Vessels

By Steven Reinberg

*HealthDay Reporter*

MONDAY, Nov. 5, 2018 (HealthDay News) -- [Caffeine](#)-laden energy drinks are popular, but they might make your blood vessels less efficient, a small study suggests.

These drinks -- sold as Monster and Red Bull, to name two -- have been linked to heart, nerve and [stomach problems](#), researchers say.

"A lot of young kids use energy drinks when they [exercise](#), a time when you need your arterial function to be at its top," said lead researcher Dr. John Higgins. He's a professor of medicine at McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

[Exercise](#) and sports require maximum blood flow so oxygen can get to cells quickly, Higgins said. Energy drinks that reduce the vessels' diameter, in effect, restrict blood flow and oxygen delivery, he explained.

"It's more work for the [heart](#) and less oxygen supply for the heart. This could explain why there have been cases where kids have had a cardiac arrest after an energy drink," he said.

Plus, people often chug energy drinks so they get the full effect in one shot, and that might be dangerous, Higgins said.

"These drinks are not intended for children," Higgins warned. In addition, people under 18, women who are [pregnant](#) or [breastfeeding](#), caffeine-sensitive individuals, those taking stimulants or caffeine-based drugs or those with heart disease should stay away from energy drinks, he added.

The study included 44 healthy, non-smoking medical students in their 20s. The researchers tested the effect of a 24-ounce energy drink on cells lining blood vessels, called endothelial cells.

The function of these cells was tested before and after the participants consumed the energy drink, and again 90 minutes later. The researchers looked at [artery](#) flow-mediated dilation -- an [ultrasound](#) measurement that is an indicator of overall blood vessel health.

After 90 minutes, the internal diameter of blood vessels tested was dramatically smaller, on average, than before, the investigators found.

This negative effect on blood vessels may be related to ingredients in the energy drink, such as caffeine, taurine, sugar and other herbals, the researchers suggested. Taurine is an [amino acid](#) touted as increasing energy and was originally extracted from bull semen -- hence the name Red Bull, the researchers said.

According to Dr. David Katz, director of Yale University's Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, "Endothelial function is, in general, a potent indicator of cardiovascular risk."

But, Katz said, "this is a small study looking only at acute effects and cannot be considered proof that energy drinks injure the cardiovascular system over time."

That being said, the combination of sugar and stimulants in these drinks has no proven benefit, Katz added.

"There are far better ways to boost energy, such as standing up and getting a bit of exercise," he suggested. "In the absence of a reliable benefit, even a low level of risk is objectionable."

A spokesman for an industry group that represents makers of energy drinks said the drinks are safe.

"Mainstream energy drinks contain about half the caffeine of a similarly sized cup of coffeehouse coffee, and have been extensively studied and confirmed safe for consumption by government safety authorities worldwide," said William Dermody, spokesman for the American Beverage Association. "Nothing in this preliminary research counters this well-established fact."

The study findings are scheduled for presentation Nov. 12 at a meeting of the American Heart Association, in Chicago.

Research presented at meetings is typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.