

Energy drinks and weight loss? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I was just wondering — can drinking sugar-free energy drinks promote weight loss? I remember hearing somewhere a while ago that it is possible for those drinks to cause those sorts of results. I am a busy college student and would love to think that it would be possible to keep my energy level up while shedding a few pounds at the same time!

Answer

Dear Reader,

Unfortunately, the magic recipe for high energy and weight loss doesn't come in a can. Energy drinks contain high amounts of caffeine, which may make you feel more alert and knock out feelings of fatigue and boredom. It is likely that your theory is based on the idea that caffeine can slightly increase metabolism. However, research suggests that sugar-free energy drinks aren't good products for weight loss.

Assuming that a person ingests enough caffeine to produce a significant increase in metabolism, it would still take a month for that person to lose a pound of fat. Moreover, the level of caffeine in energy drinks only slightly increases metabolism (burning less than 100 extra calories per day). Keep in mind that these increases in metabolism cease when the person quits her/his caffeine-gulping habits. Also, caffeine is a diuretic. This means that any initial weight loss is most likely due to lower levels of water in the body.

Increasing your consumption of energy drinks (or caffeine) to levels that will increase your metabolism isn't recommended. High levels of caffeine can cause unpleasant physical and psychological effects. These include:

- Caffeine dependency
- Nervousness
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Trouble sleeping
- Muscle twitching

- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Heart palpitations
- Ulcers and gastroesophageal reflux disease

The caffeine and taurine content of energy drinks can cause blood pressure and heart rate to increase by as much as ten percent. For healthy individuals, this isn't a huge problem, but for hypertensive individuals, excess caffeine may lead to increased risk of heart disease or stroke. For the sugar-free fiends, research on artificial sweeteners is mixed; some results show that artificial sweeteners can help weight loss, while others conclude that artificial sweeteners contribute to weight gain as well as increasing risk for certain cancers.

Although this myth-busting answer may be disappointing, have no fear. There are many ways that people (even busy college students) can increase their energy and maintain a healthy weight without relying on energy drinks. Check out [Energy boosters](#) [2] for more detailed information on fun and healthy tips for increasing your energy and living a healthy lifestyle. Let your cup of energy and good health runneth over!

Alice!

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