



Community Alert

There has been a lot of news recently about alcoholic energy drinks. In response, the UCPD has created this bulletin to answer some questions you may have.

What is an alcoholic energy drink?

Alcoholic energy drinks are a blend of both alcohol and ingredients such as caffeine or taurine or guarana; these are things you would find in a “normal” energy drink. The actual alcohol and energy ingredients vary from drink to drink but they almost always have a few common features. Usually these drinks are relatively inexpensive and heavily flavored to disguise the taste of alcohol. By masking the flavor of alcohol, it makes the drinks seem less alcoholic because they are sweet and appealing. It may also make the drinks more appealing to young people, who might dislike the harsh taste of liquor. Coupled with prices as low as two or three dollars a can and these drinks are often seen by many as a way to maximize alcohol their per dollar; but drinking these drinks can have dire consequences

What can this do to me?

Most of these drinks come in 23.5 oz cans and have alcohol contents that range from 6% to 12.5%. What does that actually mean? That means that each can of these drinks has the equivalent of about 5 cans of light beer per container. Add in the caffeine, which can be upwards of a full cup of coffee and the energy stimulants and that’s a lot of chemicals to put in your body. The biggest danger of mixing these ingredients is that the stimulants will confuse your body into thinking you’re less drunk than you actually are. Not only can this lead to binge drinking and ultimately alcohol poisoning, but it can cause any number of things from traffic accidents to fights to sexual assaults.

What's more is that we still don't know what sort of effect mixing these chemicals together will have on the body. Ostensibly, since caffeine is an “upper” and alcohol is a “downer” combining the two isn't a healthy combination. In fact, the FDA has notified the manufacturers of these alcoholic energy drinks that unless they can prove that these drinks aren't harmful, they could potentially be pulled from the market. If the federal government can't tell if these drinks are safe, is this something you really want to put into your body?

For emergencies, dial 911

For non-emergencies, call Public Safety dispatch at (805) 893-3446



So...what should I do?

If you're under 21, don't drink them! It is against the law and violates the Residence Hall alcohol policies. If you are found in violation of these policies, UCSB Judicial Affairs will require payment of a fine as well as an educational sanction.

If you're over 21, be aware of the risks associated with alcoholic beverages. Your body may react differently to an alcoholic energy drink than it does to consuming alcohol alone. The caffeine and stimulants will trick your body into thinking you're more sober than you actually are. The effects of the stimulants will wear off before the alcohol and then you'll start to feel the effects of all that liquor. Remember that one can contains as much as five light beers worth of alcohol; think about how that many drinks would normally hit your system, know your limits and make responsible decisions.

Alright, I'm in trouble and I need help, now what?

Here at the public safety department, our job isn't to get you "busted." We're not here to throw you in jail and take away your driver's license. Our job is to make sure you're safe. **If someone is really drunk, call 911.** No matter how upset you think your friend will be in the morning, it's much better to have to pick someone up at the hospital than at the morgue. We here at UCSB have lost far too many people to alcohol poisoning over the last few years, it's our campus' greatest tragedy.

Here are a few common signs of alcohol poisoning:

- Cold, clammy skin
- Unconsciousness
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Puking, particularly while passed out

If you see any of these signs, **call 911 immediately.**

Here's what you can do to help a friend who's been drinking

- Stay with the person—Don't leave them to "sleep it off"
- Ensure they rest on side to prevent choking on own vomit
- No food, drink, or drugs if they've vomited in the last 2 hours—it can cause vomiting or choking

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- Keep them still to avoid injury—No walking or standing without assistance; Do not let them leave or drive if it may cause harm to self or others
- If injured violent, unruly or need transportation – call 911

What can I do as an event host to help?

- Deemphasize Alcohol: Don't let your event revolve around just drinking booze
- Carding: Making sure only those who are legally allowed to drink can
- Getting help when it's needed: If the party or event is getting out of control or someone needs help, it's your responsibility as host to make sure to call for help.

If you have any other questions, feel free to call us anytime at (805) 893-3446 for more information.

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