

the RED CUP Q&A

separating alcohol fact from fiction

wildfact

DID YOU KNOW? Caffeine was discovered in 1819 by Friedlieb Runge.

What happens if I mix alcohol and energy drinks?

Energy drinks contain high amounts of caffeine, as well as other stimulants, sugars, and additives. You may be familiar with Red Bull, Rockstar, Full Throttle, Monster, Amp, and NOS, to name a few. Mixing energy drinks and alcohol can give you a false sense of soberness – and lead to jitteriness, headaches, and a fast heartbeat. Combining caffeine (a stimulant) and alcohol (a depressant), does not “cancel out” the effects of either substance, but rather causes you to feel less intoxicated than you actually are. This is dangerous because it may cause you to consume more alcohol than you normally would, or originally intended.

Mixing energy drinks and alcohol can lead you to engage in risky behaviors, which could have a variety of negative health outcomes. These include sexual risk-taking, driving under the influence, fighting, and injuries. The Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC) reported that drinkers who consume alcohol mixed with energy drinks are 3 times more likely to binge drink than drinkers who do not report mixing alcohol with energy drinks. They are also twice as likely to report the following: being taken advantage of sexually, taking advantage of someone else sexually, and riding with a driver who was under the influence of alcohol.

Other highly caffeinated alcoholic beverages, such as Four Loko, are especially dangerous and can cause serious health issues, unconsciousness, coma, or even death in some drinkers. One 23.5 oz. can of Four Loko has almost six times the amount of alcohol than in a 12 oz. can of Keystone Light.

Party smarter and safer by choosing an alcoholic beverage with a lower alcohol content and without caffeine. Be sure to set a drink limit, alternate with water, and stick with your plan.

Got a question about alcohol? Email it to redcup@email.arizona.edu



www.health.arizona.edu



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