

# DrinkSense.ca

## Energy Drinks and Alcohol: THE FACTS

Drinks that contain both caffeine and alcohol come in two forms. There's the type pre-mixed by manufacturers sold at Liquor Marts or the type you or someone else hand mixes with non-alcoholic caffeinated drinks bought at the store, like energy drinks.

### Mixing energy drinks with alcohol may be risky. Here's why:

- The caffeine in the energy drink can mask the effects of the alcohol - you might end up feeling like you're not impaired, but you really are.
- Hand-mixed drinks can cause more problems because they typically contain more caffeine than the pre-mixed kind.
- Not all non-alcoholic energy drinks have the same amount of caffeine. Some brands can contain as much as the equivalent of six cups of coffee.

### Increased chance of harming yourself and others

Compared to people who drink alcohol without caffeine, mixing the two increases your chance of harming yourself or others. Here's what could happen:

- The caffeine in your drink fools you into thinking you're not as drunk as you really are. You may not realize that the alcohol has affected your judgment, balance and coordination.
- The caffeine might keep you awake longer and maybe drinking longer. This increases your risk of overdosing on alcohol or something happening you might regret.

The labels on pre-mixed drinks show how much alcohol and caffeine are in them giving you control over how much you drink.

If you or someone else mixes alcohol and energy drinks by hand, you could end up drinking more of one or both than you wanted.

### Effects on your body

You probably already know the effects of drinking too much alcohol. There's throwing up, headaches and the dreaded hangover. Drinks with alcohol and caffeine can lead to even more unwanted effects like:

- Increased dehydration
- High heart rate or heart palpitations from the caffeine
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Greater risk of alcohol poisoning

### Reducing your risk

There are things you can do to stay in control when you drink:

- Limit consumption of hand-mixed energy drinks and alcohol
- Plan a safe way to get home - bus, taxi or designated driver
- Eat before and while you're drinking
- Track how much you drink
- Have water or other non-alcoholic drinks (without caffeine) in between alcoholic drinks
- Keep an eye on your friends and ask them to do the same for you
- Stay within Canada's Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

