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RUNNER'S

WORLD

August 2005

15 Nutrition Tips For
INSTANT ENERGY

BEST SPORTS BRAS

Tested By Women

The Perfect Pace

FOR BEGINNERS

**YOUR BEST
MARATHON!**

Train Less, Run Faster

3-DAY TRAINING PLAN

PAGE 72

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SUPERCHARGED Energy drinks contain lots of caffeine and sugar.

ADRENALINE RUSH. Rock Star. Pit Bull. New reality-TV shows? Nope, they're energy drinks, those slender tin cans lining beverage aisles. The trend that started with Red Bull less than a decade ago has grown into a multi-million-dollar industry with more than 100 options. With promises to boost performance, improve reaction time, and stimulate your metabolism, energy drinks sound perfect for runners. But before you decide to guzzle one to super-charge your next interval session, take a look at the ingredients that put the zing in the can.

Energy drinks should not be confused with sports drinks. Standard sports drinks such as Gatorade contain about 15 grams of carbohydrate per eight-ounce serving and are low in simple sugars. Most sports drinks also provide the electrolytes sodium and potassium to replace what is lost in sweat.

In contrast, energy drinks are more like revved-up sodas. Most are carbonated and all are *very* sweet. In fact, energy drinks typically contain more than 30 grams of carbohydrate per eight ounces, or about eight teaspoons of sugar. That makes energy drinks a poor choice before or during a run, because the high concentration of sugar can hamper fluid absorption, making your stomach feel sloshy—or even worse. “The high sugar content may have





ENERGY DRINKS PROMISE POWERFUL REWARDS. SHOULD THEY LAUNCH YOUR NEXT WORKOUT? BY JULIE UPTON, R.D.

Rocket Fuel

WARMUPS

The Buzz on Energy Drinks

A look inside those sleek tin cans

 = 1 teaspoon of sugar  = 1/2 cup of coffee								
	Calories	120/8 oz	120/8.4 oz	110/8.3 oz	140/8.3 oz	140/8.4 oz	110/8.4 oz	10/8.3 oz
Sugar							aspartame	
Caffeine								
Extras	Taurine and L-carnitine	B-vitamins and ginseng	B-vitamins and taurine	Taurine and L-carnitine	Taurine and guarana	Taurine	B-vitamins and taurine	Taurine and guarana
Taste reminds us of:	Weak citrus-flavored Kool-Aid	A melted lemon-lime Slurpee	Sweet Tarts plus cough medicine	Fizzy Sunny Delight	Carbonated Hawaiian Punch	Slightly flat ginger ale	Tangy, sugar-free Kool-Aid	Bubble gum and cream soda

a laxative effect on runners,” says Tara Geise, R.D., an Orlando-based sports nutritionist. And, of course, lots of sugar equals lots of calories—between 110 and 160 per eight ounces.

Along with all that sugar, energy drinks contain a lot of caffeine. Most have 80 to 100 milligrams, which is more than twice the amount of caffeine in a can of cola or about the same amount in one cup of coffee. For added punch, energy drinks con-

tain herbal stimulants such as guarana and ginseng, along with the amino acid taurine, an assortment of B-vitamins, and the compound L-carnitine—all touted to increase energy. But while caffeine’s performance-enhancing abilities have been documented, there is little research to support the athletic benefits of any of these other nutrients.

While most sports nutritionists do not recommend energy drinks before or dur-

ing workouts, a can every now and then probably isn’t going to hurt you, either. “If you’re healthy, with no history of heart palpitations, abnormalities, or elevated heart rate, an energy drink could be an occasional substitute for another caffeinated drink before or after a workout,” says Lisa Dorfman, a Miami-based sports nutritionist and author of *The Vegetarian Sports Nutrition Guide*.

Energy drinks cost nearly \$2 per can, making them a

lot more expensive than your average cup of Joe. And if you’re packing a few extra pounds, you probably can’t afford the extra 100-plus calories per can. Wallet and weight watchers would do best to stick with regular coffee or tea. But if you just can’t resist the cool-looking cans, consider a diet version. Dorfman admits that she sometimes drinks sugar-free Red Bull before her 5 a.m. runs for fewer calories, but lots of buzz. **30**