

“Energy” Drinks

So called “Energy” Drinks are proliferating on the market. Most of these new concoctions propose to provide energy for all sorts of activities without the “carbs” that have been so cleverly and unjustly blamed for obesity related to present health problems. Many of these drinks, either directly or indirectly, are marketed toward our children. Note, for example, the manufacturer of XS energy drink declares on the internet that their slender, 8.4 ounce can was designed to be easy for children to hold!

“0 Carbs - XS Energy Drink”

Cost \$2.00 for 8.4 Fluid Ounces (250 ml.) 24 cents an ounce! That's like paying \$30.72 for a gallon of orange juice except that the orange juice would really provide energy in a drink!

Of electrolytes needed to replace those lost in sweat:

Only a pinch of sodium (40 mg.) less than 2/100 of a teaspoon of salt.

Only a swallow of potassium (25 mg.) equal to less than half a tablespoon of orange juice or 1/2 tablespoon of milk!

Of nutrients that produce energy:

Only 1.5 grams protein - 6 Calories worth, a little over half of 1 peanut M&M.

This protein is useable only as Calories because there are only 2 of the 8 essential amino acids present, and they are of no value except as Calories without the other 6. 1.4 tablespoons milk, or 1/5 of an egg, or 1/6 of 1 ounce of cooked beef would provide as much protein and all eight essential amino acids would be present!

Of puzzling and scary ingredient Listings:

Vitamin B₁ is essential for energy metabolism but missing!

Vitamin A, calcium, iron and many more essentials - missing!

Vitamin C content is about that of an equal amount of orange juice.

Vitamin B₅ (a spurious name for Pantothenic Acid) is included. “Pan” in the real name, means present in almost every unrefined food. Beef, poultry, whole grains, potatoes, tomatoes, broccoli are especially good sources. Its inclusion can only mean it is a ruse aimed at the uninformed.

Nutrients present in potentially dangerous amounts.

Vitamins B₆ and Folic Acid are water soluble and once thought to be safe in any quantity, but long since are known to be otherwise.

XS contains 3.9 mg. Vitamin B₆ - 3 Times the RDI. An excess causes irreversible neurological damage. Monitor total intake.

Folic Acid - 400 Mcg. Can be dangerous when added to other sources. 1000 Mcg. per day is set as the tolerable upper level of intake.

Vitamin B₁₂ - 117.60 Mcg. The label proudly proclaims! That is 49 times the RDI? Why? We recycle B₁₂ so our need is very small. 2 cups of milk more than fill the requirement for a day. Have any studies been made on how this massive dose of B₁₂, (Cyanocobalamin), would impact health? I would not want to be, nor would I allow my child to be this company's guinea pig!

Other ingredients: Carbonated water, citric acid, natural flavors, 2 artificial sweeteners, (acesulfame, and sucralose), 2 preservatives (sodium benzoate and potassium sorbate), and a color, Yellow 6. Many XS beverages contain 83 Mg. Caffeine, much more than is present in any of the soft drinks. Health promoting? You be the judge!

To paraphrase Isaiah's admonition, "Why do you spend money for that which is not food and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto God. Eat that which is good and delight thyself in abundant health." Choose XS? You better be eating good on the money you have left!

Monster "Energy Blend"

Cost \$2.49 for 16 Fluid Ounces 15.5 cents an ounce! That's like paying \$19.92 for a gallon of orange juice. The orange juice would really provide energy in a drink!

Of electrolytes needed to replace those lost in sweat:

Only sodium (180 Mg.). No Potassium!

Of nutrients that produce energy:

Each Serving: 10 Calories - about the Calories of a peanut M&M. 1000 Mg. taurine, an amino acid that does not occur in natural proteins, one possible source. Glucose and maltodextrose in the "energy blend" another.

Of puzzling ingredient Listings:

Vitamin B₁ is essential for energy metabolism but missing!

Vitamin C content is less than an equal amount of orange juice.

Other nutrients are limited to B vitamins, riboflavin, niacin, pyridoxine (Vitamin B₆) and cyanocobalamin, each present in amounts equal to their Recommended Daily Intake. Monitor total intake of Vitamin B₆ (Pyridoxine) as noted above.

Vitamin A, calcium, iron and many more essentials - missing!

But the real scary ones, especially for children:

The 200 Mg. Ginseng and the 2500 Mg. "Energy Blend".

Please consider the information quoting reliable sources on ginseng at the close of this article. Note that Panax Ginseng, the type included in Monster, is the one the Herbalist magazine article quoted says causes headaches, high blood pressure and is "too stimulating" for at least one of the herbalists to take. The same magazine warns that children should not be given ginseng routinely and that there are a number of common conditions and diseases in which ginseng could make conditions worse,

The 2500 milligram "Energy Blend" is composed of L Carnitine, Glucose, Caffeine, Guarana, Inositol, glucuronolactone, Maltodextrin. It is the caffeine and Guarana in this 2500 mg. blend that are most troubling.

Because they are third and fourth in the list of ingredients, it is apparent they are present in substantial amounts. The amount of caffeine should be limited by law to 48 mg., but the Guarana, which has four times as much caffeine as coffee by weight, is a "natural" product and so the amount of caffeine it offers is not limited by law. Stimulation by caffeine is obviously a major source of the "Energy" supplied by the blend.

L Carnitine & Inositol - made by our bodies. Milk and meat good food sources.
Glucuronolactone - an acid once used to treat arthritis, neuritis and fibrositis.
Glucose and maltodextrin - carbohydrates present in all plant foods.

“Fuze - Healthy Infusions - Vitaboost”

16 Oz. 2 Servings

Contains 2% Juice “Citrus Starfruit Punch” with Guanabana*, Agave**

Of nutrients that produce energy:

80 Calories/serving, 160 per bottle. Carbohydrates - details follow.

Ingredient List: Filtered Water, Crystalline Fructose, Hydrolized Inulin*** Syrup, Orange Juice Concentrate, Citric Acid, Natural Flavor, Ascorbic Acid (Vitamin C), Vitamin E Acetate, Soy protein Isolate and soy flour, maltodextrin**** and modified food starch*****, Vitamin A Palmitate, sugar, selenium complexed with amino acids & polypeptides. No preservatives. No artificial color.

Note: Pure carbohydrates, fructose and inulin syrup head the list.

Starfruit and Guanabana and agave are not on the list of ingredients. Must only be flavors. Orange juice is the only fruit listed!

Soy - low on the list. Only insignificant amounts per serving. Probably the source of amino acids and polypeptides complexed with selenium.

* Guanabana - A tart yellow green fruit grown in South America.

** Agave - Fibrous plants as Sisal, Century Plant, Maguey cactus.

*** Inulin - a polysaccharide (many sugar molecules chemically linked together) usually used in diabetic bread or for testing kidney function.

**** Maltodextrin - carbohydrate that melts on hot food and gives the flavor similar to butter or margarine.

***** Modified food starch - Carbohydrate with feel of fat.

Ingredients of concern:

Vitamin A - 10,000 IU (5,000/Serving) - 1 serving contains the RDI for the day. Drink the contents of the entire bottle and have 2 times the RDI. Add that to all the vitamin A in the diet, especially if supplements are also taken, and the danger of excess Vitamin A looms. Pressure in the head mimicking a brain tumor, deep bone pain, falling hair, leathery skin, and more, including fetal damage to the unborn.

Selenium - 80 Mcg. per serving 160 for entire bottle. - Highly toxic. Recommended range from 20 Mcg./day for children to 70 Mcg./day for nursing mothers! Tolerable upper limit for children 12 Years 150 Mcg. One bottle has more! Tolerable upper limit for adults - 400 Mcg. This includes selenium from food and all supplements! Seafood, liver, eggs, milk, whole grains, etc. generally good sources. Excess selenium is the content of “loco weed” that causes neurologic damage and then death to animals on the forage.

Ginseng

Wendy Schiff, 1979, U. of Mo. Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist.

“A recent article reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* warns that large doses (of ginseng) result in sleeplessness, depression, loose stools, and disruption of nervous functioning. About 14% of the

individuals in the study showed signs of a new medical disorder called GAS (Ginseng abuse syndrome). Medical problems included high blood pressure, sleep disturbances, skin problems and nervousness.”

From Sept. 1989 issue of *Vegetarian Times Magazine*. Section -”The Herbalist”. Article titled “Getting to the Root of Ginseng” by Mark Cullen and Carol Wiley. The first three pages and a portion of page 4 give a litany of values claimed for *Panax* ginseng. All of them are related to stimulus of some sort and many relate to sexual function. Then come statements like:

“Paul Hsu, President of Hsu’s Ginseng Enterprises, Inc., Wausau, Wis. ... “the Asian variety is too stimulating for him. I’m a type A personality,” Hsu says. “Asian ginseng makes me feel like I’ve had too much coffee.””

“Medical herbalist, David Hoffman, director of the California School of Herbal Studies, Forestville, and the American Herbalist Guild, routinely suggest Siberian ginseng instead of the *Panax* varieties. “Some people have headaches or an increase in blood pressure when taking *panax* ginseng, but there has never been a documented case of reaction to the Siberian second cousin.”

The article then goes into the amount to be taken and a discussion of the way one can judge by experimentation whether the ginseng is good for them, particularly people with high blood pressure or diabetes. Then there is this warning: “There are specific times when ginseng is not recommended. According to Oriental herb expert Dr. Tei Fu Chen, ginseng should not be taken during an acute illness such as a cold, flu, fever or bronchial ailment unless administered by a competent practitioner. If not prescribed correctly, it could make conditions worse.

“Women need to be aware that huge amounts of ginseng, particularly red ginseng - which is considered more stimulating - can alter menstrual cycles, increase menstrual flow or worsen premenstrual syndrome because it increases estrogen levels.”*

“Ginseng also should not be used when you are constipated or if you are obese. Young children also should not take ginseng routinely, because it increases the level of sex hormones and could cause children to reach sexual maturity too soon.”