

Health Mixing energy drinks and alcohol can 'prime' you for a binge

Health Let's talk about (50 and over) sex! Join TODAY for a special summer event

Health Stop bugging me! Work interruptions mess with your productivity

Skin-Care Hold your nose! 7 things you never knew about body odor

Trending Esquire article 'praising' 42-year-old women spurs 'sexiest' criticism

Relationships Love, sex and marriage get surprising updates thanks to 'Satisfaction' survey

Health

Mixing energy drinks and alcohol can 'prime' you for a binge

Linda Carroll TODAY contributor

16 hours ago

There's more evidence that mixing alcohol and energy drinks like Red Bull, Rock Star and Monster is a bad idea. A new study finds it can boost the risk of binge drinking.



Australian researchers found people had a greater urge to keep drinking after downing a beverage containing both alcohol and an energy drink, compared to alcohol alone, according to the report published in Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research.



Joe Raedle / Getty Images

Ever since energy drinks and vodka became a popular cocktail, researchers have warned about the risks.

It's possible that caffeine may be amplifying the high that comes with alcohol, said Rebecca McKetin, the study's lead author and a fellow at the Australian National University's Centre for Research on Aging, Health and Well-Being.

Whatever the mechanism is, "our findings suggest that energy drinks may increase the risk of people drinking to intoxication and consequently increase the risk of alcohol-related problems like drunk driving and alcohol-fueled violence," McKetin said.

McKetin and her co-author, Alice Coen, rounded up 75 volunteers, aged 18 to 30, and asked them to fill out a questionnaire that rated their urge to drink. Then the volunteers were randomly assigned to receive either an energy drink combined with fruit juice and two shots of vodka or soda water and fruit juice mixed with two shots of vodka.

Questionnaires filled out 20 minutes after the cocktails were downed showed that volunteers who had consumed the combination of alcohol and energy drinks had a greater urge to keep drinking.

Around the Web



11 Bad Habits That Make Your Hair Thinner (Prevention.com)



Kaley Cuoco's Amazing Body Perspective (Womenshealthmag.com)



7 Facts You Didn't Know About Your Muscles (Womenshealthmag.com)



What Happens When You Stop Brushing Your Hair for a Week (Womenshealthmag.com)

What's intriguing about the new study is that it focused on the early, or "priming," effects of caffeine and alcohol, said Dr. Larissa Mooney, an addiction psychiatrist and an assistant professor of psychiatry at University of California, Los Angeles. "It shows that something is happening to trigger a desire to want more, and that that happens pretty early on, after the first drink is consumed."

While the increase in the urge to drink was moderate, "it adds to the larger conversation about alcohol and energy drinks," said David Jernigan, an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "Particularly for young people, mixing alcohol with high levels of caffeine, from all we can tell, may lead to a greater likelihood of bad things happening."

Dr. Charles O'Brien, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania and director of the Center for Studies in Addiction, agreed. "The real risk of this combination is that people feel they aren't drunk when they are," he said. "That's because caffeine wards off the sedation that normally comes when you drink."

Tags: [TODAY Health](#), [Health](#)

 [Share on Facebook](#)

[Talk about it](#)  0

[More from TODAY.com](#)

[Around the Web](#)

[?]

Body odor: 7 things you never knew about being stinky

Prince George at age 1: Fun facts about the birthday boy

Savannah Guthrie on maternity fashion: The third rail of style

'Mommy!' Jenna Bush Hager screams on 'Terror-dactyl' 

Are probiotics right for you? 

Health

Let's talk about (50 and over) sex! Join TODAY for a special summer event

TODAY

26 minutes ago



Do you want attend a special focus group on sex and intimacy after 50? TODAY is looking for women and men who are interested in attending an event on July 29 with Dr. Lauren Streicher, author of "Love Sex Again" to talk about all things sex for people who are 50+.

How do men and women view sex after 50? What are the differences and what are the similarities?

TODAY will be covering the event and we may choose to spotlight you and your opinion on this important topic.

The event will be fun, laid back and informative. We are looking for married or committed couples ages 49-65 to participate who are willing to be open and frank and answer a series of questions on camera about intimacy which will then be a part of a story airing on TODAY.

If you are interested, please send an email with the following information to nbc50event@gmail.com.

Please include:

Name