

additives from their products — Diet Coke and sugar-free Dr. Pepper come to mind — and in many instances adding vitamins or fruit juice to snare health nuts.

That's where Jolt enters the picture. Responding to the vanishing "robust, natural cola flavor we loved as youngsters," Jolt opts for the reverse approach: Trash the corn syrup and Nutrasweet and pack that puppy with 100 percent of the more expensive natural cane sugar.

Now, how much would you pay? Don't answer yet, because you also get 98.3 percent of the caffeine allowed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration per fluid ounce, whereas the six leading sodas average less than 60 percent. Ounce for ounce, though, coffee contains five times the caffeine content of Jolt.

Jolt not only may be good, but good for you, or so believes Dr. Richard Wurtman, the clinical research director for the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In a letter flaunted before the media by Jolt promoters, Wurtman praises the company's sugar/caffeine combination, surmising the recipe may maximize the useful behavioral effects produced through consumption of the two food constituents.

Writes Wurtman: "...caffeine works by blocking brain receptors for one neurotransmitter compound, adenosine, while sugar increases the formation and release of another transmitter, serotonin. Sugar's effects on mood are highly desirable; however, one pays the price of becoming lethargic, and even sleepy, after drinking sugar-rich beverages. Caffeine blocks the lethargy and sleepiness, concurrently increasing vigilance. So the combination is good."

Speaking to this appraised blending, Robert Bell, the communications vice president for the Jolt Beverage Co. in Vancouver, B.C., said there is no U.S. soft drink on the market with real sugar other than Jolt.

In a promotional visit to campus last Thursday, Bell said the Sugar Association of America, which plans to endorse Jolt as its official beverage, has promoted the use of real sugar in food products. In a campaign to destroy myths about real sugar, the sugar association, using

FDA research, maintains real sugar "is no longer considered a cause of obesity, nutrition deficiencies, tooth decay and cancer," he said.

"Basically what they're saying is sugar isn't the bad guy that everybody told us it was," Bell said.

Bell added there's no evidence moderate amounts of caffeine are harmful and said caffeine consumption has long been used by body-builders to strengthen muscle tissue.

The ability of students to use Jolt as a finals week pick-me-up "really depends on how sensitive they are to the caffeine," Bell said. "The sugar itself is going to give them more energy. We're not saying 'Jolt is the ticket — it's going to get you an A because you're going to stay up for three days.' If your choice is something cool and refreshing, rather than coffee or No-Doz, Jolt is clearly the choice refreshment," Bell said.

"Students like Jolt a lot. (They) have a very high usage for Jolt," said Ken Baumann, the import division manager for Portland Distributing Co.

Whatever the appeal, Jolt has obtained 1 percent to 6 percent of the carbonated beverage market in most of the cities it serves, drawing enthusiastic response from all age groups, according to promoters.

Since it was introduced in Rochester, N.Y., nearly a year ago to date, the cola has crept onto the soda scene in 47 of the 50 states, Oregon being the 47th.

The first trucks hauling Jolt over state lines unloaded the cargo two weeks ago in Portland, where it was unveiled to Oregonians. Since then, more than 50,000 cases have been distributed primarily to metropolitan markets in Oregon.

"We can't make enough to get it here fast enough," Bell said, adding a Seattle plant will soon be bottling Jolt for Oregon and Washington.

When Jolt Cola first arrived locally March 2, Coast Distributors of Springfield shipped 2,200 cases throughout Lane County, said branch manager Jerry Haddock. The distributorship since has provided Jolt to half its nearly 500 accounts, he said.

"Don't even have to sell it — they call us," Haddock said.

Drugs

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"People who commonly use these for the effects they have on the brain are unaware of the peripheral effects which they can cause such as tremors and increased blood pressure," Ripley said.

Although ephedrine is manufactured to relieve bronchitis sufferers, business major Tim Faris said he takes a pill now and then when cramming for exams and plans to do so when studying for his four upcoming finals even though he has no congestion problems.

"Most of the time I end up procrastinating and waiting 'til the last week and a half of the term before I get anything done," he confessed.

Ephedrine is "the same as speed," he said. "I don't drink coffee. Caffeine makes me too jittery — this stuff keeps me awake but doesn't make me jittery."

"I don't know if you're supposed to use this stuff to keep awake, but it works for me. I figure, if they sell it over-the-counter, it's not going to kill me."

Other students may smoke cigarettes through study periods.

Nicotine is a stimulant that "affects the transmission of nerve impulses and causes blood vessels throughout the body to dilate and contract," Ripley said.

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