

Upside to the Downside of Energy Drinks

by DeAnna Pearl, ATOD Prevention Specialist

We all do it! Stop at the local drive-through coffee shop to get a pick-me-up. Purchase some "energy" to make it through the rest of our day.

In addition, youth and adults are doing the same with the purchase of so-called "energy drinks." Most people haven't given much thought to the potential health risks of these products.

"Energy drinks" were popularized in the United States with the 1997 introduction of Red Bull®, a carbonated beverage from Austria that contains 80 mg of caffeine in every bottle – about the same amount as is found in a cup of coffee.

For comparison, classic Coca Cola® contains 23 mg caffeine and Mountain Dew® contains 37 mg caffeine. The caffeine content of a single serving of "energy drink" can range from 72 to 150 mg, however, many bottles/cans contain **2-3 servings**, raising the caffeine content to as high as **294 mg** per bottle/can.¹

These drinks do not depend on caffeine alone to provide the boost. The term "energy drinks" refers to the beverages that contain caffeine in combination with other ingredients, such as taurine, guarana and B vitamins.

These drinks also contain large amounts of sugar. On average per serving, there are **27 grams of sugar**. **Remember**, many bottles/cans contain **2-3 servings**, raising the sugar content to as high as **86g per bottle/can**.

The calories in these drinks do provide some energy, but mostly their content of caffeine and taurine "soup up" one's feelings of alertness and may produce troublesome side effects such as anxiety, irritability, heart palpitations, difficulty sleeping and indigestion.

These manifestations are more likely to occur with "energy drinks" than with coffee, which one usually drinks more slowly than the cooled "energy drinks." "Energy drinks" also can lead to dehydration because caffeine stimulates urination and thus increases water loss.

Here's the kicker: Many brewing companies have taken notice of the trend to use these drinks as mixers with alcohol. They are now selling "energy drinks" already laced with alcohol – carbonated malt beverages (beers) containing somewhat more alcohol than average beers, along with the caffeine, taurine, and other constituents of the non-alcoholic "energy drinks."

As many as 20 brands of alcoholic "energy drinks" have been marketed in the last 10 years. Federal officials have been asked to investigate the ingredients in these products because of their alcohol content and because of the advertising accompanying them, which targets underage customers with misleading claims of benefits, such as increases in energy and stamina. Unfortunately, most of these cans/bottles look the same as non-alcoholic counterparts.

What can you do? First, limit or stop your minor from consuming these "souped up" drinks. Ask local stores and mini-marts to change their sales policies to minors for better monitoring. Get informed about the potential health risks of these products. Parents are the first line of defense on children's health.

For more information, please contact me at 541-444-8267 or 800-600-5599.

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TLC Attitudes of Gratitude

by Lynn Whitlow

Look around for the "May flowers." They probably won't be roses, but stop to smell them anyway.

At the Women's Transitional Living Center (TLC), we hold a Women's Talking Circle every month. This circle is open to all women to come share their hearts and concerns with each other.

The night before I wrote this column, we had a very powerful Talking Circle with the topic pre-requested by a group participant. Ten women attended and all were able to share their feelings and experiences about grief and loss. They also freely shared their gratitudes.

A TLC resident and group participant shared her experience: "I knew that I could come to the Talking Circle with my feelings about grief and loss. The women in this Talking Circle are so powerful. I knew I could get healing just being and participating in the Circle."

She also shared her gratitudes: "I am grateful for the communication and caring between the residents and the A&D/TLC staff. I'm grateful for my friends in the community because I can call them and they'll be there to help me. I am grateful to the TLC coordinator for transporting us and for putting up with us. I am grateful that I can laugh and really mean it."

We at the TLC invite and encourage other women to join us at our next circle at the TLC on May 14. We begin with a potluck dinner at 5:45 p.m. It's a wonderful time of fellowship, woman talk and laughter. The Talking Circle begins at about 6:30 p.m. and ends when the sharing is over.

This writer has been attending these circles for about eight years. They

have all been awesome – whether attended by two or 15 women. Please join us at the May circle. If you can't be here for dinner, please come for the Talking Circle. Unfortunately we don't have child care at this time.

Call 541-444-8238 or 800-600-5599 if you have any questions.

Occasionally, past TLC residents check in with us to let us know their successes, get some guidance on tough life issues or just chat. A past resident called this week and was talking about things she was grateful for. She said, "I can write down 15 things I'm grateful for."

She didn't quite have time for 15, but here are some she wanted to share with you: "I'm grateful for my 'adopted' mom, for folks in Newport and Siletz who support me and are like family. I'm grateful for my first child and his adoptive mother. I'm grateful for my daughter and my expected child. I'm grateful for the life God gave me and for the second chance I have in my recovery groups. I'm grateful for the Siletz Tribe, for my health. I'm grateful for being a good mom and for having kids around me. I'm grateful for learning and improving my life skills and for getting to grow each day. I'm grateful for having love in my life."

Wow! And what is your gratitude level?

We're still seeking overnight volunteers at the TLC and women in recovery, who attend AA and NA, who would be willing to pick up and drive TLC residents to evening meetings. Call 541-444-8238 or 800-600-5599 if you are willing to serve.

Have a lovely spring!



Walt's Words of Wit and Wisdom

by Walt Klamath

We have been having a big fight – with alcohol. Alcohol says we can whip it, so we try. We swing, miss, alcohol hits, down we go.

Alcohol says it was a lucky punch, you can beat me. We believe alcohol, we try again and maybe last a couple of rounds, then whop, down we go.

Again alcohol says lucky, you can beat me anytime. Again we believe alcohol, it's so convincing and we go at it again, really putting forth the energy. We are going to beat alcohol this time; again alcohol puts us down.

Many of us have had this battle over and over, then one day alcohol puts us down for the count, we may or may not survive.

Alcohol can be beat. Sometimes we have to have help in doing it. A few of us can do it by ourselves but from what I have seen, most of us have had some help from the judge or PO.

Now, I do agree we don't like being told we have to do something. Well, we don't have to do anything, we do have a choice. Most of the time the second choice is worse than the first.

Sometime we have to attend a self-help activity. From my own experience, I didn't like it. Didn't like the people there; I was above them, I thought at the time anyway.

One time at a self-help activity in Newport, I was sitting at the table looking at them scrungy-lookin' losers, figuring I don't belong here. I have a college education (Multnomah Tech, automatic transmissions), I own three or four vehicles, I own a fishing boat, and I have 10 acres. Big deal.

The fellow leading the session owned a 70-foot high liner fishing boat, I have a 20-foot dory. Man beside me was a professor at Linfield College. Across the table was a fellow from

Tillamook, he owned 200 head of dairy cattle (I have two cows). Another fellow owned a fleet of trucks. I was shut up and didn't even say anything, one of the few times I kept my mouth shut.

These people had all whipped alcohol. They did not do it on their own power, they had to have another source of power to give them that knockout punch against alcohol.

We sometimes think we are unique, that no one knows what is happening in my life, but there are many who do know. We have to listen and we have to talk. We have to bring out these innermost feelings and take a look at them. Then we listen to others about how they overcome these barriers.

Today one of our metaphors is the water, the most powerful force on earth, the most patient force, the most determined force and the most humble force. It takes the easiest route, it goes

in the lowest areas, nothing stops it over time.

Water comes to a barrier and will go under it, around it or over it or remove it. Dams are put on the rivers, they have to be continually maintained or water will remove it.

That is the way we have to attack alcohol or any other addiction. We have to be more determined than alcohol or other drugs. It can be done, however it's not easy or simple.

Many of us have whipped alcohol. Its spirit, however, is waiting, also patiently, for us to be in a weak moment. Just like the little hawk that hovers over the field waiting for a mouse to appear and whop! It's done it again. Once we are addicted, we are always addicted, much to our dismay.

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength and power. Everyone has it in them.