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**SUPPLEMENTS AND ENERGY DRINKS**

 **Workout Supplements Can Pose Risks**

Active duty military, DoD Civilians and family members often use workout supplements for boosts of energy and to maximize performance during workouts. Post-workout supplements are used to lessen the pain after a strenuous workout session and assist in muscle recovery. Although supplements can provide benefits, some may be dangerous if not used properly.

Some people will use a combination of supplements all at once (also known as stacking as stacking) and are unaware of the potential risk that exist. They assume that if it's sold on the market, at a reputable store, then it must be safe. Not so. Here are a few factors to consider when taking supplements:

* Is it necessary, when a proper diet and exercise will yield the same results?
* Are side effects such as increased heart rate, nausea, dehydration, diarrhea, abdominal discomfort or organ damage worth the risk?
* Supplements are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) therefore what is the opinion of the FDA concerning specific dietary supplements?
* A “Natural” supplement does not mean they are safe.

Workout supplements containing harmful ingredients that are available to consumers have proven to be dangerous, one such supplement is Ephedra. Most products containing Ephedra were removed from the market after mounting reports of injuries and deaths. Be aware and be cautious. Just because a product is sold on the market does not mean it is safe.

**Dangers of abusing Energy Drinks**

 Energy drinks claim to provide people with increased energy levels that will keep them active & alert. Most energy drinks contain at least as much caffeine as a standard eight-ounce cup of coffee (~80mg). To put it into perspective, a 12oz. soda contains 18-48mg of caffeine. The caffeine that is found in energy drinks is dangerous enough on its own. Not only is caffeine addictive, it acts as both a stimulant and a diuretic. As a diuretic, caffeine causes your kidneys to remove extra fluid from your body. If you consume energy drinks while sweating, these effects can be particularly dangerous because you can become severely dehydrated quickly. As a stimulant, caffeine can make you have anxiety attacks, heart palpitations, and insomnia it can also make you jittery or irritable.

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In addition to large doses of caffeine, energy drinks contain excessive amounts of sugar & legal herbal stimulants. Energy drinks are a deceptive combination of soft drink and pseudo-nutritional supplement and it is still unclear what effect those ingredients can have on your body.

 Manufacturers of energy drinks are not required by law to list whether or not the herbs they use, have been sprayed with toxic pesticides, irradiated or watered with contaminated water supplies, so there is no telling what other toxins are contained in these drinks and whether or not these herbs will have a negative effect on the body.

 Many people have started mixing energy drinks with alcohol because it makes them feel alert and energetic. Energy drinks mixed with alcohol will decrease the body’s internal water supply and natural detoxification processes causing severe dehydration. Using energy drinks during exercise or other strenuous activity does nothing to provide the body with necessary nutrients or fluids and compounds the problem of dehydration.

 Energy drinks, add more toxins to an already toxin burdened body, the bottom line concerning energy drinks is that medical professionals simply do not know the long-term effects of consuming these beverages.

**Do’s and Don’ts of energy drinks**:

* **Do** drink more water to hydrate vice energy drinks
* **Don’t** drink energy drinks to maintain a high level of alertness. Your body will eventually “crash” by abusing energy drinks.
* **Do** read labels carefully and research your product. Just because it taste good and provides short burst of energy does not mean it is good for you.
* **Don’t** mix alcohol with energy drinks. The contents of energy drinks mixed with alcohol can confuse the body’s system of balance and lead to hazardous results.
* **Don’t** be fooled by “natural” energy drinks. Make sure you read the ingredients and that they are from an “herbal” derivative.

**Remember!!** Eat healthy, drink plenty of water and exercise regularly. Your body will perform when you need it most.

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