

# ENERGY DRINKS

*have been shown to have the potential to cause harm, including death to young and vulnerable individuals*



## WHAT ARE ENERGY DRINKS?

A beverage that contains large amounts of caffeine and sugar along with a combination of other stimulants and supplements including but not limited to taurine, guarana and ginseng.

## THE PROBLEM

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines energy drinks as “a class of products in liquid form that typically contain caffeine, with or without other added ingredients”
- Energy drinks are classified as “dietary supplements” and often not regulated by the FDA vs. sports drinks that are categorized as food with strict laws applying to labeling
- Energy drinks are marketed along side vitamin waters, sports and electrolyte drinks, and regulated lower caffeinated drinks
- Promoted as substances that
  - increase energy and concentration
  - enhance athletic performance
  - stimulate mental activity and alertness
- Energy drinks
  - have double or triple the limit for sodas
  - contains a range of caffeine—from that in a 12-ounce caffeinated dark soda (35-50 mg) to the amount in over 6 cups of coffee (505 mg all at once)
- Fountain energy drinks or shots have variable unregulated amounts of caffeine
- Energy drinks affect your heart like an EpiPen, causing over-stimulation and marked stress on the heart
- Up to 44% in some studies with severe adverse cardiovascular effects

***High amounts of caffeine and other stimulants are being added to lemonades and other fruit-based drinks—some of which have already been removed from the market.***

 **Parent Heart Watch.** ParentHeartWatch.org

Adapted with permission from presentation at 2024 National Heart to Heart by Victoria Vetter, MD, MPH, Cardiologist and Cardiac Electrophysiologist in the Division of Cardiology at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

## THE SOLUTION

- Regulation as a food by FDA; also regulation of sale and consumption by age
- Transparency of active ingredients
- Set maximum allowable amount (total mg) of active ingredients in a unit, including total amount of caffeine from ALL sources
- Clearly indicate precise amount of caffeine in container
- Clear labeling of:
  - risks and adverse effects
  - vulnerable populations that should avoid product consumption
- Education of consumers



**SARAH KATZ**  
2001-2022

Sarah was diagnosed with a heart condition at the age of five, which was being monitored by her cardiologist and well-managed by medication. Sarah was conscientious about her condition and avoiding energy drinks given their high content of caffeine, sugar and other stimulants. Sarah was starting her junior year at the University of Pennsylvania when she tragically passed away at 21 years old. Being completely misled by the contents of the beverage, Sarah consumed a large drink from a national fast food restaurant on the day of her passing, before going into cardiac arrest.