

# Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

## A Look at Energy Drinks: Paying the Price for Caffeine?

Energy drinks (e.g., Red Bull®, Monster®, Rockstar®, and Full Throttle®) are among the fastest growing beverages in the United States, with half of these highly caffeinated drinks being sold to youth. The caffeine content of an 8-ounce serving can range between 72 and 150 mg. However, most energy drinks come in cans or bottles with 2–3 servings, amounting to 450 mg of caffeine (**general recommended intake is no more than 200–300 mg caffeine daily for adults!**) There are no guidelines established in the United States for youth regarding caffeine consumption. Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration limits caffeine content in soft drinks because they are categorized as “food,” caffeine in energy drinks is not “monitored” because they can be categorized as “dietary supplements.”



Energy drinks are promoted as a means to increase energy levels; however, there is little evidence to support this. With the large quantity of caffeine comes serious nutritional consequences. Large quantities of caffeine can hinder how well the body is able to absorb and use calcium, which can impact bone health. Additionally, high caffeine intake is associated with increased irritability, anxiety, tremors, heart rate, blood pressure, and sleep problems.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has expressed concerns for youth because of caffeine’s effect on their developing neurological and cardiovascular systems, as well as the risk of physical dependence and addiction. Many of the “specialty” ingredients (e.g., guarana, taurana) found in energy drinks are also ingredients in over-the-counter diet drugs. This raises significant health concerns because it is unclear what combined health impact these ingredients may have.

Because of the potentially high caffeine content, it is recommended youth avoid energy drinks and healthy adults should limit their use. Teach youth to ask for and enjoy water as the thirst quencher of choice.

For more ideas on better or healthier beverage choices, please look at the MyPlate Better Beverage Choices Handout available at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) in English <http://1.usa.gov/1k0nH4D> and Spanish <http://1.usa.gov/1llhb0V>.

Sources: <http://bit.ly/1aOIBF1>, <http://bit.ly/1xYGmSp>, <http://bit.ly/1llh05J>, and <http://1.usa.gov/Pog5yZ>



## Fruit Smoothies

Serving Size: 1 cup  
Serves: 3

### Ingredients

- 2–3 cups of fresh or frozen fruit
- 1 (6–8 ounce) carton vanilla, plain, or fruit-flavored yogurt
- 1/4 cup milk
- 3 ice cubes

### Instructions

1. Wash hands.
2. Put all ingredients in a blender.
3. Blend on high speed until smooth.
4. Pour into glasses.

### Nutrition information per serving:

150 calories, 1.7g total fat, 0.9g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 5.5mg cholesterol, 61.3mg sodium, 31.5g total carbohydrate, 2.8g fiber, 22.6g sugar, 4.9g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart Eat Smart website ([www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings)).



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## Home Food Safety Mythbusters

**Myth: "It is OK to wash bagged greens if I want to. There's no harm!"**

**Fact:** Rinsing leafy greens that are ready to eat (those labeled "washed," "triple washed," or "ready to eat") will not enhance safety and could actually increase the potential for cross-contamination. This means harmful bacteria from your hands or kitchen surfaces could find their way onto the greens while washing them.

**Myth: "I don't need to rinse this melon for safety. The part I eat is on the inside!"**

**Fact:** A knife or peeler passing through the rind can carry harmful bacteria from the outside into the flesh of the melon. The rind also touches edible portions when cut fruit is arranged or stacked for serving and garnish. Rinse melons under running tap water while rubbing with your hands or scrubbing with a clean brush. Dry the melon with a clean cloth or paper towel.

**Myth: "Be sure to rinse or wash raw chicken, turkey, or other poultry before cooking it!"**

**Fact:** Rinsing poultry is an unsafe practice because contaminated water may splash and spread bacteria to other foods and kitchen surfaces.

**Myth: "Cross-contamination doesn't happen in the refrigerator...it's too cold in there for germs to survive!"**

**Fact:** Some harmful bacteria can survive and even grow in cool, moist environments. Keep fresh produce separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. For tips on how to clean and disinfect your refrigerator, go to <http://bit.ly/1DeqVeO>.

Sources: <http://bit.ly/1FQlpQp>

## Health Benefits of Bicycling

Bicycling increases one's physical activity and can reduce weight. In addition, cycling has been shown to have a positive effect on emotional health. It can improve levels of well-being, self-confidence, and stress while reducing tiredness and sleep difficulties. As the weather continues to improve, enjoy the outdoors on your bike. The Iowa DOT's "Bikes HomePage" provides an interactive map showing the surface type and length of various bike trails at <http://bit.ly/1PHCj9B>.

If you want to know how many calories you burned on your bike ride, check out the "MapMyRide" calculator or find out information on how to download the "MapMyRide" app at [www.mapmyride.com/improve/calorie\\_calculator/](http://www.mapmyride.com/improve/calorie_calculator/).

Sources: <http://bit.ly/1PHCthd>



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