New Study: Do Energy Drinks Affect Your Heart Health?

Men's fitness - By Shaw n Radcliffe
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The latest research on these uppers—and what it means for you.

We all know that an energy drink can be great when you need a quick boost, but a new study is again calling their safety—more specifically, their effects on heart health —into question. Should you be worried?

A review of previous research, presented at the 2013 American Heart Association meeting in New Orleans, found that drinking one to three energy drinks could mess with your heart rhythm and increase your blood pressure. If severe enough, these changes could lead to an irregular heartbeat or even sudden cardiac death.

In the seven studies reviewed, which involved people between 18 and 45 years old, those who consumed energy drinks experienced a 4 percent change in the rhythm of their heart. In addition, their systolic blood pressure—aka the top number on the blood pressure reading— jumped by 3.5 points.

While the changes seem small, they can still cause problems for certain people. According to AHA spokesperson Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D., those with an existing heart condition or a family history of heart problems, like an irregular heartbeat, should avoid drinking energy drinks.

But if you're generally healthy, do you need to swear them off? Probably not, but the key—like with most things—is moderation. Some men could have an undiagnosed heart condition that could land them in the emergency room after one energy drink too many. Just don't overdo it by downing several cans in one day, and when you do drink one, keep an eye out for these side effects, which could signal a bad reaction:

- Racing heart
- Skipping or jumping heartbeat
- Feeling jittery or anxious
- Extended dizzy spells.