

Energy drinks can negatively impact health of youth

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Over half of Canadian youth and young adults who have consumed energy drinks have experienced negative health effects as a result, according to a study from the University of Waterloo.

In a nationwide survey of Canadian youth, over half of those who had

ever consumed an [energy](#) drink had reported experiencing an adverse health event, including [rapid heartbeat](#), nausea, and in rare cases, seizures.

Currently, Canadian legislation is meant to prohibit energy drinks from being marketed to children and energy drinks are not recommend to be used by people participating in sporting activities.

"Most risk assessments to date have used coffee as a reference for estimating the health effects of energy drinks; however, it is clear these products pose a greater health risk," said David Hammond a Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Waterloo. "The health effects from energy could be due to the different ingredients than coffee, or the ways in which they consumed, including with alcohol or during physical activity; regardless, the findings suggest a need to increase surveillance of health effects from these products."

In conducting the study, the researchers surveyed 2,055 young Canadians aged 12 to 24. Of those that had reported consuming energy drinks at some point in their lives, 55.4 per cent reported experiencing an adverse health event.

Of those reporting adverse [health](#) events, 24.7 per cent reported experiencing a fast heartbeat, 24.1 per cent reported difficulty sleeping and 18.3 per cent reported experiencing headaches. A total of 5.1 per cent reported nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, 5 per cent sought medical attention, 3.6 per cent reported experiencing chest pains, and 0.2 per cent reported having a seizure.

"The number of [health effects](#) observed in our study suggests that more should be done to restrict consumption among children and youth," said Hammond. "At the moment, there are no restrictions on children purchasing [energy drinks](#), and they are marketed at the point-of-sale in

grocery stores, as well as advertising that targets children."

Hammond's study appears in the journal *CMAJ Open*.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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