

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### The Dangers of Mixing Stimulants with Alcohol

The definition of a stimulant is a substance that temporarily quickens a vital process or the functional activity of an internal organ. The most common stimulant that we are familiar with today is the traditional cup of coffee. For college age students, (ages between 18 and 25) the beverage of choice has become a can of Red bull. Red bull is a carbonated drink consisting of sugar, vitamin B complex, and high levels of caffeine (Touraine). About 31 percent or 7.6 million teens nationally consume at least one can of Red bull a day. A potentially dangerous consequence of drinking Red Bull can be that when it is mixed with alcohol, it could be fatal.

Unfortunately, Red Bull and vodka is available to the public at most bars and clubs around the nation. It has been shown that mixing these two substances can cause respiratory, cardiovascular, and muscle tribulation. This drink combination is even considered to be a recreational drug in Norway, Denmark, and France. A high level of caffeine is a tremendous 'upper' or stimulant to the central nervous system, while alcohol is a 'downer' or depressant. When high levels of these two are ingested together the body doesn't know what to do. The two do not negate each other, but . . . .

Unfortunately Red Bull and other energy drink alternatives are not going to disappear from our retail food industry. They are a highly profitable food product and on their own merits do not meet any criteria for governmental regulation. Addiction professionals and the public need to make every effort available to keep teens away from this deadly mix.

If you would like any alcohol or drug related information, please feel free to contact Manalapan/Englishtown Community Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse at 732-446-8417.

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