

# Canadian Teen Has Seizures After Drinking Too Much Red Bull

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

- October 5, 2010

Health Canada's adverse reaction newsletter reported today that an 18-year-old man appears to have had seizures after drinking two cans of Red Bull energy drink on an empty stomach. The teen had no prior history of a seizure disorder or [brain injury](#) and was not taking any medications. No drugs or electrolyte abnormalities were found in his system at the time of the seizures.

After a long night of studying, the teen drank two 355 ml cans of Red Bull in the course of about 30 minutes. About an hour afterwards, he experienced two grand mal seizures, which are caused by abnormal electrical activity throughout the brain. They are most often associated with epilepsy, but can be caused by other things such as low blood sugar.

The teen was taken to an emergency room and was examined but released the same day. He had not experienced any further seizures at the time of his one-year follow-up.

Health Canada concludes that the teen's seizures were caused by a reaction to the energy drink. Four cases of energy-drink associated seizures have been published, according to the agency.

## High Doses of Caffeine May Increase Risk of Seizures and Brain Injury

Red Bull and other energy drinks are marketed as providing both mental and physical stimulation, fighting fatigue and improving endurance. Active ingredients include caffeine, a carbohydrate called glucuronolactone and the amino acid taurine.

Research on caffeine suggests that the doses found in energy drinks could increase the risk of some medical problems ranging from gastro-intestinal issues to heart palpitations. Caffeine is known to act on the brain, heart and muscles.

Red Bull is regulated in Canada as a natural health product, and its label warns consumers to drink only one can per day.

Nevertheless, there has been mounting pressure in Canada to tighten the sale and advertising of energy drinks. The Canadian Medical Association has joined in the call for stricter regulation.

In the U.S., natural health products are not regulated by the FDA, although their advertising is regulated through the Federal Communications Commission. One of the main ways dangerous

products are controlled in the United States is through [product liability](#) lawsuits when someone is injured or sickened by a product.

Health Canada says that it chooses the topics to highlight in its adverse reaction newsletter based on "seriousness, frequency of occurrence or the fact that the reactions are unexpected."

Source:

["Teen has 'seizures' after drinking Red Bull"](#) (Toronto Sun, October 5, 2010)