

Possible Monster Energy deaths: Should energy drinks be regulated?

By [Laura Shin](#) | October 22, 2012, 9:04 PM PDT



Caffeine-filled energy drinks are one of the fastest-growing sectors of the beverage industry, but an inquiry by the Food and Drug Administration into fatalities and health risks from Monster Energy drinks could put a halt to that.

The FDA is looking into whether Monster Energy drinks played a role in five deaths since 2009, though the agency emphasized that there is no evidence that the drinks caused the deaths.

The FDA reports were obtained through the Freedom of Information Act by the mother of a 14-year-old Maryland girl, Anais Fournier, who died last year from a heart arrhythmia after she drank two 24-ounce cans of Monster Energy two days in a row.

The mother, Wendy Crossland, is suing the company for negligence and wrongful death, accusing it of failing to warn consumers about the drinks' health risks.

The company said last week its products did not cause the girl's death, but the company's stock slid 14% in trading Monday.

[The New York Times reports:](#)

In an interview, an F.D.A. spokeswoman, Shelly Burgess, said the agency had received reports of five deaths with possible links to the drink as well as a report of a nonfatal [heart attack](#). Additional incident reports referred to other adverse events such as [abdominal pain](#), [vomiting](#), tremors and abnormal [heart rate](#). The reports disclosed cover a period of 2004 to June of this year, but all the deaths occurred in 2009 or later.

The release of these reports could prompt Congress to call for more regulation of energy drinks, whose rapid growth included a 16% jump in sales last year to \$8.9 billion. Energy drinks include Monster Energy, Red Bull, Rock Star and energy "shots" such as 5-hour Energy, which are marketed mainly to teenagers and young adults.

Currently, energy drink companies are not required to disclose the caffeine levels of their drinks, which are often marketed as dietary supplements, but labels on Monster Beverage drinks state that they are "not recommended" for children (under 12) and people "sensitive" to caffeine. A 24-ounce can of Monster Energy contains 240 milligrams of caffeine.

What do you think? Should such drinks should come with warning labels? Or is it too soon to say?

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