

ALCOHOL ENERGY DRINKS TARGETED TO YOUTH

The latest effort of the beer industry to lure new customers is the introduction of malt liquor products containing high doses of caffeine and alcohol. Examples include Anheuser-Bush's *Bud Extra* and *Tilt* and Miller Brewing Company's orange-flavored *Sparks* malt liquor. While these products have not been widely advertised, they are promoted on youth-oriented websites targeting underage drinkers.



BUD EXTRA

SPARKS

TILT

A key problem is that the packaging of these malt liquor products closely resembles that of non-alcohol energy drinks. In fact, the malt liquor-energy drinks generally cost 50 cents less than those without alcohol. Store clerks arrested for selling these products to minors said they were not aware that they contained alcohol.

The mixture of alcohol and caffeine is also seen in cocktails of liquor and non-alcoholic energy drinks as well as in the new fruit flavored malt liquor products containing elevated levels of caffeine. A recent Wake Forest University study found that those drinking alcohol mixed energy drinks were **twice** as likely to:

- Drink more
- Be drunk
- Ride with a driver who has been drinking
- Commit a sexual assault
- Be a victim of a sexual assault
- Be hurt or injured
- Require medical attention

The reason for these problems is that the stimulant effects of high dose caffeine in energy drinks masked the feelings of being intoxicated from the alcohol. Thus, people drank more and experienced more consequences.

[Visit to see a recent WFOR-Channel 4 news story about these products](http://cbs4.com/seenon/i.team.miller.2.643928.html)
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To learn more about this issue and others related to alcohol and youth, contact the LiveFree! Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Pinellas County at 727-545-7564 ext.259 or at livefree@operpar.org. You can also visit our website: www.pinellascoalition.com

LiveFree! is an alliance of community organizations and individuals charged with preventing and reducing alcohol and other drug use among youth and young adults throughout Pinellas County.