Health alert over energy 'shot' drinks

Bottled water 'not as safe as tap variety'

I. Summary

Health alert over energy 'shot' drinks
Health authorities in the US have launched an investigation into 5-Hour Energy ‘shots’ after the deaths of 13 people have raised safety questions, and a recent US government survey suggested that energy drinks could be behind up to 13,000 casualty visits a year.

5-Hour Energy is marketed as a pick-me-up and contains hefty amounts of sugar and caffeine. Its size means multiple shots are being consumed adding to potential side-effects. According to one UK Conservative MP, urgent research is needed as well as a temporary ban on sale to under-16s.

The market for energy drinks has exploded in recent years. The company that makes the energy shots says it contains as much caffeine as a cup of coffee, recommends no more than two shots a day and is “unaware of any deaths … caused by … 5-Hour Energy.”

Bottled water ‘not as safe as tap variety’
Research has found that while tap water undergoes safety tests daily, the bottled variety is only required to be tested monthly. Tap water contains chlorine that prevents the spread of bacteria but a bottle of water contains no disinfectant and may remain in storage for months.

Bottled water costs up to 1000 times more than tap water, but Prof Younger says that, from a safety and price perspective, tap water is better for you. Bottled water can be easily contaminated, and once opened has no way of remaining sterile so should be drunk on the same day.

Britons spend an annual £1.5 billion on bottled water, and Mintel found that up to a quarter do so because they think it is better for them than tap water. Sue Pennison says, “Tap water is safe to drink, everything else is a personal lifestyle choice.”

II. Vocabulary Recap

Health alert over energy 'shot' drinks
Alleged: said or thought by some people to be the stated bad or illegal thing, although you have no proof
Assess: to judge or decide the amount, value, quality or importance of something
Ban: an official order that prevents something from happening
Beverage: a drink of any type
Exceed: to be greater than a number or amount, or to go past an allowed limit
Fizzy: effervescent, carbonated
Forthcoming: produced, supplied, given
Hefty: large in amount, size, force, etc
Intake: the amount of a particular substance which is eaten or drunk during a particular time
Life-threatening: can cause death
Miscarriage: an early unintentional end to a pregnancy when the baby is born too early and dies because it has not developed enough
Over-the-counter: bought from a shop without visiting a doctor first
Pick-me-up: something which makes you feel better, often a drink or a tonic
Potent: very powerful, forceful or effective
Roughly: approximately
Side-effect: an unpleasant effect of a drug that happens in addition to the main effect
Spark: to cause the start of something
Survey: an examination of opinions, behaviour, etc., made by asking people questions
Swift: happening or moving quickly or within a short time
Urge: to strongly advise or try to persuade someone to do a particular thing

Bottled water 'not as safe as tap variety'
Borehole: a deep hole made in the ground when looking for oil, gas or water
Cheap: costing little money or less than is usual or expected
Plentiful: existing in great number or quantity
Sealed: closed
Spring: a place where water naturally flows out from the ground
Stringent: having a very severe effect, or being extremely limiting
Tamper with: to touch or make changes to something which you should not, usually without enough knowledge of how it works or when you are trying to damage it
Tap: a device that controls the flow of liquid, especially water, from a pipe

III. Cultural References

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services and is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety, tobacco products, dietary supplements, prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceutical drugs, vaccines, biopharmaceuticals, blood transfusions, medical devices, electromagnetic radiation emitting devices, and veterinary products.

Emergency Room (ER), also known as accident & emergency (A&E) or casualty department

Agence France-Presse (AFP) is a French news agency, the oldest one in the world, and one of the three largest with Associated Press and Reuters

Conservative MP Rob Wilson (born 4 January 1965) is a UK politician and entrepreneur. He was elected Conservative MP for the Reading East parliamentary constituency in the 2005 general election

Labour MP David Hanson (born 5 July 1957) is a British Labour Party politician, who has been the MP for Delyn since 1992. He was the Minister of State for Security, Counter-Terrorism, Crime and
Policing from 2009 to 2010. From the 11th May 2010 he has been the shadow police and justice minister and also Shadow Treasury Minister.

**Monster Energy** is an energy drink, launched in 2002. There are now 27 different drinks under the Monster umbrella in North America.

**The British Soft Drinks Association** represents UK producers of soft drinks. Membership at present includes around 90% of the manufacturers of Britain’s soft drinks.

**The Daily Mail** is a British daily middle-market tabloid newspaper. It is the UK’s second biggest-selling daily newspaper after The Sun.

**Mintel** is a privately owned, London-based market research firm. Mintel databases, analysis, and forecasts are accessible only to subscribing clients and to students in participating university libraries.

**The Drinking Water Inspectorate** is a section of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) set up to regulate the public water supply companies in England and Wales.

**British Bottled Water Producers** exists to promote positively and proudly the best of British bottled waters. For health, economic and environmental reasons, buying locally-produced British Bottled Waters is viewed as a positive move for many of us.

### IV. Going Further

**Health alert over energy ‘shot’ drinks**

- What’s your opinion on energy drinks?
- What do you think about the way young people are consuming them?
- Should there be a ban on sales to under-16s?
- Could the deaths have been in combination with other stimulants/medication?
- Is it the manufacturer’s or people’s own responsibility to read the label and not to drink too many?
- England footballers recently had to take sleeping pills after taking caffeine tablets for a match... Footballers dropping dead or having heart attacks on pitch... Is there a link?

**Bottled water ‘not as safe as tap variety’**

- Do you drink bottled or tap water?
- Do you believe bottled water is ‘better for you’?
- Is bottled water a waste of money?
- Are water filters just as effective?
- Carbon footprint of bottled water
- Fluoride in tap water