

# Use of caffeine powder a growing trend

By Erin Beresini, Outside

On May 27, an Ohio teenager was found dead in his home, the victim of a caffeine overdose. The tragedy could have fueled the energy drink debate, which has spiked in recent years and rages on due to recent lawsuits alleging drinks like Red Bull contain unsafe levels of stimulants. But no mention of these. That's because the teenager, Logan Stiner, didn't chug a Red Bull or a Monster Energy Drink before he died; he ingested caffeine powder.

Caffeine powder is your favorite stimulant in its purest form, either produced synthetically or extracted from foods that naturally contain caffeine, like coffee beans and kola nuts. It's easy to buy the fine, white powder in bulk on the Internet. It's completely legal, and there's no age restriction. One hundred grams of the stuff costs just \$9.50 on Amazon.

Why the heck would anybody buy pure caffeine? Mother Nature Network reports that it can "increase alertness, improve concentration, and enhance mood." Caffeine has also been shown to improve athletic performance by warding off mental and physical fatigue, and reducing the perception of pain.

As the *Washington Post* reports, "energy-boosting foods racked up more than \$1.6 billion in domestic retail sales" in 2012, up nearly 50 percent from 2007. But consumers know those are jacked-up prices, and some try to make their own. Enter caffeine powder.

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