

Sports and Energy Drinks - UK - September 2011

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"Energy/sports drinks offer a compelling proposition: Mintel's consumer research shows that seven out of ten UK adults like the taste and an equal share use them for their energy-giving properties."

– Jonny Forsyth, Senior Drinks Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Given their high price-points and the current economic troubles, why are sports/energy drinks performing so well?
- Does the recent exponential growth mean that the market is becoming mature?
- Is the association of energy drinks with kids something which could damage sales long-term?
- Are there opportunities for new brand entrants?

Definition

This report focuses on RTD (ready-to-drink) sports and energy drinks.

Sports drinks are drinks that claim, through scientific analysis, to improve sporting performance or to speed recovery. Most of these drinks are labelled isotonic/hypotonic and are aimed to rehydrate and replenish the sugar, water and other nutrients lost during exercise. Examples include Lucozade Sport, Powerade and Gatorade. As these contain very little carbohydrate (5-8%), such drinks provide fluid quickly as they are more easily absorbed, but contain relatively small amounts of energy.

Sports drinks are divided into three major types:

- Isotonic drinks: These have the same osmolality as that in the body, and are designed to aid rehydration as they are therefore readily absorbed into the blood. Isotonic drinks include Powerade and Lucozade Sport.
- Hypotonic drinks: These have a lower osmolality than body fluids and are therefore absorbed more quickly than isotonic drinks and more quickly than water into the blood.
- Hypertonic drinks: These have a higher osmolality than body fluids and are designed to be taken after exercise to replace electrolytes, aid recovery and provide an energy boost. Lucozade Sport Hydro Active is a hypertonic drink.

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