

Press Release

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: BuzzBallz Rise in Popularity with GenZers

As April is Alcohol Awareness Month, it is fortuitous to inform the community about a drink among GenZers that has gained popularity at alarming rates. GenZers, individuals roughly between 14–29 years old have been enjoying BuzzBallz - hard drinks sold in bottles that resemble phosphorescent billiard balls. They contain around 15 percent alcohol by volume, more than double that of the average beer. They cost around \$4 apiece and come in flavors like Strawberry ‘Rita and Peachballz.

BuzzBallz emerged in 2009 and are sold widespread in liquor stores that contain spirits like vodka and rum, while BuzzBallz Chillers, are available in gas stations and convenience stores, contain a base of wine made from oranges or agave, permitting establishments with wine licenses to sell rather than more restrictive liquor licenses.

As the brand has grown, so have concerns that the drinks are intentionally positioned to appeal to minors (though the company says it is careful not to market to underage people and takes steps to prevent use by minors). The drinks are portable, flavored, and cheap, making them appealing to young people. The packaging is toylike and makes the product more closely resemble an energy drink than an alcoholic drink and lend themselves well to social media influence. Several TikTok challenges have started (including one where people combine BuzzBallz with other beverages with high alcohol content), and the company sends free beverages to some people 21+ who post about the brand. In 2024 partnerships were announced with athletic programs at two universities to offer drinks in stadiums.

BuzzBallz are portable, flavored and cheap, a combination that has earned them a reputation as a go-to beverage for Gen Z. They were the No. 2 prepared cocktail brand in terms of dollar growth during a four-week period ending in January, according to Nielsen IQ. The brand was acquired by the spirits company Sazerac in 2024; that same year, Forbes estimated its annual revenue to be somewhere around \$500 million. BuzzBallz are reaching a generation whose members have a reputation for being hesitant drinkers. The rate of adults ages 18 to 34 who reported drinking alcohol fell nine percentage points from 2023 to 2025, according to a Gallup survey, continuing a trend that began more than a decade earlier.

One dangerous but common challenge on TikTok and other social media platforms, people combine BuzzBallz with two other beverages with a high alcohol content, then down the entire mixture. The trend was shared last month by an influencer with four million TikTok followers.

In December the company released an even larger version, Boulders, which contain three liters of liquid and about as much alcohol as 25 standard cans of beer.

The rise in scrutiny comes amid broader concerns about alcohol branding in sports and the "normalization" of drinking among youth. Health experts warn that these drinks are often mistaken for non-alcoholic beverages and pose high risks of rapid intoxication and adverse health effects, particularly on developing brains.

According to the U.S Surgeon General's 2025/2026 Advisory: Alcohol and Cancer Risks, Alcohol consumption is a leading preventable cause of cancer in the United States, contributing to nearly 100,000 cancer cases and 20,000 cancer-related deaths annually. However, public awareness of this risk remains low—less than half of U.S. adults recognize alcohol as a cancer risk factor.

Scientific research has established a direct link between alcohol and at least seven types of cancer, including breast, colorectal, liver, and oral cancers. Even moderate alcohol consumption—such as one drink per day—can increase cancer risk. Alarmingly, alcohol-related cancer deaths shorten lives by an average of 15 years, with the total years of potential life lost estimated at 305,000 annually.

Keep aware, stay informed and avoid unhealthy behaviors. "Live SAFE!". The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition works diligently to protect youth and inform parents through prevention education to avoid the negative consequence of alcohol addiction.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one's health and wellness. The Glen Cove Police Department has been a longstanding member of the Coalition and works diligently to monitor alcohol sales to minors, monitor hot spots where youth are known to drink and provide prevention education to youth and adults about Glen Cove Social Host Law and its consequences throughout the year. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit www.safeglencove.org.