



Taurine is found in energy drinks such as Red Bull ( Image: Getty Images)

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## Energy drink hidden ingredient could be the key to living to 100 with a healthy life

Taurine, which is normally found in energy drinks as well as some food with protein, has been found to increase the life span of mice - and now scientists are calling for a major trial on humans

By **Chiara Fiorillo**, News Reporter

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A common ingredient typically found in energy drinks could be the key to a long and healthy life, after researchers found that supplements can slow down the **ageing process**.

According to scientists, taurine - which is used by the human body for action in cells - could be "an elixir of life" and potentially help people live longer.

The chemical occurs naturally in the body and is also found in some foods that contain protein, such as meat or fish.

Researchers from **Columbia University** in New York discovered that levels of taurine fell by 80 per cent with age, but that topping them up to more youthful levels boosted the health of monkeys and expanded the life span of mice and worms.

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**Taurine was found to slow down the ageing process in mice** ( Image: Getty Images)

Dr Vijay Yadav, who led the research team, said that while it is currently unclear whether humans may benefit in the same way as animals, a large-scale trial should be carried out to learn more about the impact taurine can have on a person's life span.

Prof Henning Wackerhage, from the University of Munich, said a study could compare human lifespans after taking daily taurine or placebo supplements - and see if they can live healthier for longer.

During the study at Columbia University, scientists orally fed taurine or a control solution daily to middle-aged mice until the end of their life.

They found that mice of both sexes that were fed taurine survived longer than the control

life - with their median life span increasing by 10% to 12%, while life expectancy at 28 months increased by about 18% to 25%.

Researchers also discovered that the taurine-fed middle-aged mice had a healthier functioning of bone, muscle, pancreas, brain, fat, gut, and immune system, indicating an overall increase in health span.

Similar results were found in monkeys, scientists, who also investigated the effect of taurine supplementation in worms and yeast, said.

They said that taurine - which is usually found in energy drinks such as Red Bull - did not affect the life span of unicellular yeast but increased the life span in multicellular worms.

The study, published in **Science**, says: "Taurine abundance decreases during aging.

"A reversal of this decline through taurine supplementation increases health span and life span in mice and worms and health span in monkeys. This identifies taurine deficiency as a driver of aging in these species."

It adds: "Reversal of taurine deficiency during aging may be a promising antiaging strategy.

"Given that taurine has no known toxic effects in humans (though rarely used in concentrations used here), can be administered orally, and affects all the major hallmarks of aging, human trials are warranted to examine whether taurine supplementation increases healthy life span in humans."

However, without a major trial to demonstrate the safety or benefits of taurine supplements in humans, scientists do not recommend people boost their intake through pills, energy drinks or dietary changes.

While some energy drinks contain taurine, scientists warn they also contain other substances that may not be safe or healthy to consume at high levels.

Professor Wackerhage said: "What we really need now is a human intervention study. We are raring to go."

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