The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is investigating reports that five people have died since 2009 after they consumed Monster energy drinks, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The investigation was announced after parents of 14-year-old Anais Fournier sued the company in connection with their daughter's death.

The FDA said it has not established a connection between the drinks and the deaths, the article notes. The FDA can regulate caffeine levels in soft drinks, according to the newspaper. The limit in a 12-ounce soda is about 71 milligrams. The caffeine levels in most energy drinks exceed that level, because they are labeled dietary supplements.

In a statement, the company said, "Monster does not believe that its products are in any way responsible for the death of Ms. Fournier and intends to vigorously defend the lawsuit."

According to the company, the drinks "generally contain approximately 10 milligrams of caffeine from all sources per ounce. By comparison, the leading brands of coffee house brewed coffee contain on average more than 20 milligrams of caffeine per ounce. An entire 24-ounce can of Monster Energy contains about 240 milligrams of caffeine from all sources, which is around 30 percent less than the average caffeine contained in a medium-sized, 16-ounce cup of coffee house brewed coffee."

Last year, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration issued a report that found a sharp rise in the number of emergency department visits linked with the use of non-alcohol energy drinks, from 1,128 visits in 2005, to 13,114 in 2009. The report noted that energy drinks are marketed to appeal to youth, and are consumed by up to half of children, teenagers and young adults.

In April, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois called for an investigation into energy drinks, after learning of Fournier's death from cardiac arrest after drinking two 24-ounce Monster energy drinks in a 24-hour period.

Drinking alcohol and energy drinks together has become trendy, but it can also be risky. Click here to learn more about Alcoholic Energy Drinks.