

ENERGY DRINKS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are Energy Drinks?

Energy drinks are beverages that claim to stimulate and energize the user. They contain high amounts of caffeine, a central nervous system stimulant that makes the user more alert and delays sleep.

Examples of energy drinks include:

- Monster ®
- Red Bull Energy Drink ®
- Red Bull Energy Drink ®
- Rockstar ®
- SoBe Adrenaline Rush ®
- SoBe No Fear ®



Why should I be concerned about Energy Drinks?

Research has indicated that children and teens are the main consumers of energy drinks. Although energy drinks are not sold at school, many students are purchasing them during their recess or lunch breaks at local stores. While most energy drink labels do caution that **children should not consume** these beverages, there are currently no regulations prohibiting sale to children. The primary reasons students gave for drinking energy drinks were to increase energy, improve athletic performance and because of the taste, peer pressure and attractive packaging.

Teachers and school administrators are concerned about the consumption of energy drinks because students who drink them have increased behavioral problems and are unable to concentrate in class. Parents should be concerned about the affects that the large amount of caffeine is having on their children, especially if they are also taking medication.



How much caffeine is safe?

There is no human requirement for caffeine in the diet. Health Canada recommends that caffeine intakes **not exceed** the following:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Children, 4 – 6 years | 45 mg per day |
| Children, 7 – 9 years | 62 mg per day |
| Children, 10 – 12 years | 85 mg per day |
| Adults | 400 mg per day |

It takes very little for children to reach these limits, as indicated by the following list of caffeine amounts in common foods and beverages:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Chocolate Bar | 10 mg caffeine |
| Cola (12oz can) | 40 mg caffeine |
| Tea (8oz cup, medium) | 45 mg caffeine |
| Coffee (8oz cup, medium) | 95 mg caffeine |
| Energy Drink (16oz can) | 160 mg caffeine |

What are the health risks of too much caffeine?

Over consumption of caffeine through beverages such as energy drinks can cause the following negative symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Dehydration
- Electrolyte disturbances
- Excessive urination
- Headaches
- Nausea and vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat
- Restlessness
- Sleeplessness



What can I do to minimize the risks associated with Energy Drinks?

Please support your school administration by encouraging your child to not consume energy drinks during the school day. Instead, please encourage your child to consume healthy, non-caffeinated beverages such as water, 100% fruit juice, white milk and chocolate milk.

References:

Dietitians of Canada, Energy Drinks – Do they have a place in the diet of Canadians. 2005.
Health Canada, It's Your Health. Safe Use of Energy Drinks. 2005