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HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

Student Health CONNECTION

A resource for school staff and teachers

Energy Drinks 101

Energy drinks are a unique beverage category marketed to provide fast energy and improve performance. However, they are not recommended for adolescents and teens due to limited evidence of safety¹.

What is in energy drinks¹?

Caffeine: Caffeine is a stimulant; too much can cause headaches, irritability, nervousness anxiety, insomnia, restlessness and rapid heart rate.

Sugar: Energy drinks can contain a lot of added sugar which can contribute to overweight and obesity when consumed on a regular basis.

Taurine: Taurine is an amino acid that many energy drinks claim can make you more alert. However the evidence to back up this claim is lacking. There is also a lack of research on the long-term safety of taurine use in teens and young adults.

Herbal ingredients: Herbal ingredients such as ginseng and ginkgo biloba are often added to energy drinks claiming to help improve performance. However there is little research to prove their effectiveness. Herbal ingredients may also interfere with other medications or supplements and cause harm.

Other ingredients: Many other things may be added to energy drinks without any guarantee of added benefits. For example, niacin, a B vitamin found in many foods, is often added to energy drinks and may cause symptoms such as burning, itching and redness at high doses.

Caffeine and energy drink facts¹:

- The amount of caffeine in most energy drinks is more than the recommended daily amount for teens.
- It is easy to overconsume caffeine by drinking multiple energy drinks. One energy drink can contain 80-294mg of caffeine.
- For teens, it is not recommended to consume more than 2.5mg/kg of caffeine per day. This means that a 130lb (59kg) teen should not consume more than 148mg of caffeine in a day.



Are energy drinks different from sports drinks¹?

- Sports drinks are meant to be consumed during exercise and contain a balanced amount of carbohydrates and electrolytes.
- Energy drinks contain a lot of sugar which can cause stomach upset or dehydration during exercise.
- Energy drinks are not recommended for use before or during exercise.

Can energy drinks be mixed with alcohol?

- Due to the caffeine content of energy drinks, it is possible for an individual to feel less intoxicated and consume dangerous amounts of alcohol.
- Caffeine and alcohol are also both diuretics increasing the risk of dehydration.
- The overall safety and effects of combining energy drinks and alcohol for teens are unknown.

What are ways to increase energy without energy drinks²?

1. **Make sure you get enough sleep** – to have enough energy to last all day.
2. **Eat a healthy balanced diet** – healthy meals and snacks from a variety of food groups will help provide you with all the energy you need for the day.
3. **Be physically active** – physical activity such as jogging or yoga can help you feel more energetic and help you feel good about yourself.

4. **Stay hydrated** – drink water or milk (or fortified milk alternatives such as soy beverages) throughout the day to stay hydrated.

Tips for teens consuming energy drinks³:

- Carefully read the labels and follow the instructions – do not exceed the recommended dose.
- Consume energy drinks in moderation.
 - Do not consume them on an empty stomach.
 - Do not use them to replace meals.
- Never mix energy drinks with alcohol.
- Drink water or sports drinks, not energy drinks, before and during exercise.

For more information search “Energy Drinks” in www.eatrightontario.ca or contact Michelle Saraiva, Public Health Dietitian, at michelle.saraiva@hnhu.org

1. Eat Right Ontario [Internet]. Dietitians of Canada c2015 [Cited 2015 Nov 5]. Facts on energy drinks. Available from: <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Caffeine/Facts-on-Energy-Drinks.aspx#.VjfNc7GEjcs>

2. Middlesex-London Health Unit [Internet]. [Updated 2014 Dec 19; Cited 2015 Nov 5]. Energy Drinks. Available from: http://www.healthunit.com/energydrinks#reference_1

3. Health Canada [Internet]. [Updated 2012 May 10; cited 2015 Nov 3]. Information for parents on caffeine in energy drinks. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fin-an/securit/addit/caff/faq-eng.php>



Make sure to get your copies of our 'Energy Drink Awareness' poster series to hang up in your school or classroom today. Use the key messages in the newsletter to talk to your students about the risks and dangers of consuming energy drinks. To get copies, contact your school health nurse or health promoter listed on the back page.

FACTS

Energy Drinks

- One energy drink can contain 80-294mg of caffeine.
- 1 energy drink can have as much sugar as 9 cookies.
- Surveys from Canada and the US reveal that about 25% of young adults recently mixed energy drinks with alcohol. (Brache, 2012)

What is the caffeine and sugar content of energy drinks?

Drink	Serving (fl. oz.)	Servings per container	Sugar per serving (g)	Caffeine per serving (mg)	Calories per serving
Diet Rockstar Energy Drink™	8	2	0g	80	10
Full Throttle™	8	2	29g	72	111
Go Girl Sugar Free™	12	1	0g	150	3
Lo-Carb Monster XXL™	8	3	3g	80	10
Monster Energy Assault™	8	2	27g	80	100
Monster Energy XXL™	8	3	27g	80	100
Red Bull Sugar Free™	8.3	1	0g	80	10
Red Bull™	8.3	1	27g	80	130
Rockstar Energy Drink™	8	2	30g	80	90
Rockstar Juiced™	8	2	21g	80	90
Wired 294 Caffeine™	8	2	26g	147	100

Note: This table does not include amounts of other stimulants found in energy drinks that can enhance the effects of caffeine. (Heneman, 2007)

Caffeine is also found in other beverages and foods such as: regular and diet colas, iced teas, tea and coffee and chocolate.

Recommended that teens do not exceed 2.5 mg per kg of body weight per day of caffeine



Your School Health Team

Public Health Nurse	Health Promoter	School
Ruth Ann Shoemaker RuthAnn.Shoemaker@hnhu.org	Jenn Dahl Jennifer.Dahl@hnhu.org	Holy Trinity Catholic School Simcoe Composite School Waterford District Secondary School
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Community Sexual Health Services are available in various locations throughout Haldimand and Norfolk counties including Caledonia, Dunnville, Langton and Simcoe.

We provide:

- Birth control counselling and low cost birth control
- Pregnancy testing and referral
- Emergency contraceptive pills (Plan B)
- Needle Syringe Program
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)/HIV testing
- Cervical screening
- Sexuality/sexual orientation information

Appointments preferred.

Contact 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623 Ext. 3225 or 905-318-5367 Ext. 3346 to book an appointment



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