

PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...? ENERGY DRINKS ARE NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL OR SCHOOL EVENTS.

ARTICLE FROM

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Information for Parents on Caffeine in Energy Drinks

How much caffeine is safe for my children?

Health Canada recommends the maximum daily caffeine intake for children under 12 should not exceed 2.5 mg/kg of body weight. Based on average body weights of children, this means a maximum of:

45 mg for children aged four to six, about one 355ml can of cola
62.5 mg for children aged seven to nine, about one and a half 355ml cans of cola
85 mg for children aged 10 to 12, nearly two 355ml cans of cola

Teens should follow the precautionary recommendations of 2.5 mg/kg body weight. Older and heavier adolescents may be able to consume up to the adult limit: 400 mg/day.

Which products have caffeine in them?

Caffeine is found in a variety of products -- coffee, tea, chocolate, cola and certain medications as well as energy drinks and so-called energy shots.

The level of caffeine in energy drinks is different in each product, but can range anywhere from 50 mg per can to above 200 mg per can, well above the recommended maximum daily intake for most children and teens.

What should I know about energy drinks and my kids?

Energy drinks are not recommended for children because of their high levels of caffeine, and other ingredients. In some cases, one energy drink could have more caffeine than the safe daily intake for many children and teens.

It's hard to link levels of caffeine to specific health effects because everybody has a different tolerance for caffeine, but we do know that children are at increased risk of experiencing behavioural effects from consuming caffeine.

Health Canada has received a number of reports of suspected health problems associated with energy drinks. Symptoms have included irregular heart beat and nervousness. If you suspect your child is experiencing such problems contact your health care professional and report the problem to the manufacturer.

Is it safe to use energy drinks to keep hydrated while playing sports?

Energy drinks should not be confused with sports drinks such as Gatorade® or Powerade®. Sports drinks rehydrate the body and provide sugars, which the body burns to create energy and replenish electrolytes. Electrolytes maintain salt and potassium balances in the body.

Energy drinks, on the other hand, should not be used as a fluid replacement. Because of their caffeine content, they can actually mask the signs of dehydration.