Sports Nutrition for Youth: Choosing Healthy Drinks Module
Introduction

The information contained in this module has been adapted from the Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches, www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-sports-nutrition-for-youth.pdf

The information in the handbook is based on current research and best practice in sports nutrition at the time of publication. These modules aim to support coaches who work with recreational athletes, rather than elite athletes. Coaches should always consult a sports dietitian for young athletes who compete at an elite level or who need special nutrition advice.

The purpose of the sport nutrition modules is to share key sport nutrition information packaged into shorter learning modules to assist coaches in educating their athletes and parents. These modules can be delivered in the dressing room, on the bench or in a classroom style setting. No technology is required. There are a total of six sport nutrition modules available and they include:

- What to Eat Before During and After Activity
- What to Drink Before During and After Activity
- Choosing Healthy Drinks
- Planning for Tournaments, Competitions and Travel
- Nutrition Supplements and Sports Performance
- Alcohol and Sports Performance

How to Use this Module

Key teaching points: These spotlight the main nutrition messages from the module to share with athletes and parents.

Background information: This section provides greater detail and research about the topic of each module including explanations of the ‘what’ and ‘why’ behind the key messages.

Materials for athletes: These tools and resources include websites and handouts that can be passed along to your athletes and parents to provide extra ideas to support healthy eating for athletes.

Time to deliver the module: The module could be delivered in 5–15 minutes depending on how much time you have with your athletes and how much detail you want to go into with them. If you only have a few minutes, the key teaching points could be delivered in about 5 minutes and then you could provide your athletes and parents with the handouts for further information. If you were to go through the teaching points as well as the background information it could take about 10–15 minutes.
Choosing Healthy Drinks

This module outlines information about many different types of beverages that children and youth are exposed to. It brings awareness to the amounts and potential impacts of ingredients such as sugar and caffeine.

_Note:_ For more detailed information on what and how much to drink for sports, please refer to the following pages in _Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches_, [www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-sports-nutrition-for-youth.pdf](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-sports-nutrition-for-youth.pdf)

- Nutrition and Hydration Guidelines _before_ activity: pages 31–32
- Nutrition and Hydration Guidelines _during_ activity (including information on sports drinks): pages 34–38
- Nutrition and Hydration Guidelines _after_ activity: page 41
- Learning activities: pages 43–44

For guidelines outlining what and how much to drink for sports and activity, please see the _What to Drink Before During and After Activity Module_.

Key teaching points

**General tips to choose healthy drinks:**
When choosing drinks for children and youth look for drinks with:
- No added sugars
- No caffeine
- No sugar substitutes
- Lower amounts of naturally occurring sugars

**Sugar:**
- Drinks containing higher amounts of natural or added sugar may replace healthier foods and drinks in the diet, making it hard for children and youth to get the nutrients they need.
- Choosing drinks with lower amounts of sugar may help reduce the risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain.

**Sport drinks:**
- Athletes don’t need to consume sports drinks for most activity. It is better to eat food and drink healthy fluids such as milk and water to help refuel before or after activity.
- Water is the best choice during and after exercise for most kids and teens.
- Sports drinks are only needed for intense, continuous activity that lasts for more than one hour with little time for recovery (for example: tournaments and competitions).

**Caffeine:**
- Caffeine is found in drinks like coffee-based drinks, energy drinks, tea, iced tea and pop.
- Athletes may experience side effects of caffeine including nervousness, faster heart rate, irritability, and problems sleeping.
- Caffeinated drinks are often high in sugar and low in nutrients.

**Energy drinks:**
- Energy drinks are not recommended for children and youth because of their high levels of caffeine and sugar, as well as the other added ingredients, such as vitamins and herbs.
- **Energy drinks are not the same as sports drinks** and should not be used during exercise. Energy drinks do not keep you well hydrated.
- The caffeine and sugar in energy drinks may cause harmful side effects such as headache, trouble sleeping, nervousness or anxiety, and upset stomach.
Background information

Why is too much sugar an issue?

When high sugar foods or drinks (pop, baked goods, candies and cereals with added sugar) are eaten instead of more nutritious foods, the body may not get enough vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients. For example, if people choose pop instead of milk, they may not get enough of calcium and vitamin D. High sugar food and drinks are often called “empty calories” because they are typically high in energy and low in nutrients.

What is the suggested maximum intake of added sugar?

The World Health Organization recommends that people have no more than 10% of their total energy (calorie) intake from added sugars. According to the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI), individuals who consume more than 25% of their energy from sugar have decreased intake of vitamins and minerals. More studies are needed to know how much added sugar or total sugar increases risk for specific diseases.

Table 1: Recommended Maximum Intake of Added Sugar Suggested by the World Health Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Daily amount in teaspoons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children (4–8 years)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (9–3 years)</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenagers (14–18 years)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculations based energy intakes from Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide, with the maximum added sugar being 10% of total calories. Note: 1 teaspoon equals 4 grams of sugar.

Added sugar intake should be minimized. Many drinks with added sugar have low or no nutritional value. Although sugar in fruit juice is naturally occurring, it is still recommended to limit fruit juice to a ½ cup (125 mL) serving per day and encourage consumption of whole fruits and vegetables, as they contain fibre and are often more satisfying.

Sports drinks

Athletes do not need to consume sports drinks to help refuel before or after activity as it is better to eat food and drink healthy fluids, such as water and milk.

- Sports drinks contain sugar so they can also lead to cavities or weight gain if young people drink them on a regular basis. A 710 mL bottle of a sports drink has 10 tsp (40 g) of sugar. If a student had 1 bottle (710 mL) of a sports drink every day for a year, they would have consumed 32.1 pounds (14.6 kg) of sugar.

- Sports drinks are not recommended as an alternative to water when kids and teens are not active.
• Sports drinks may be helpful for **intense, continuous** activity that lasts for **more than one hour** with little time for recovery to provide energy and replace electrolytes (for example: tournaments and competitions).

**Caffeine**

There are many caffeinated drinks sold on the market such as cola, coffee, tea and energy drinks. Consuming caffeinated drinks may help people to stay more alert. However, having too much caffeine may lead to undesirable effects such as headache, drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, anxiety and depression. Studies have shown that caffeine may have an adverse effect on children and youth’s behaviour such as inability to concentrate and increased restlessness. It is recommended that children and youth avoid caffeine and have non-caffeinated drinks instead, like water and milk.

Table 2 outlines the maximum daily caffeine intake to ensure all Canadians stay within these limits.

**Table 2: Health Canada’s guidelines on daily caffeine limits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Daily Caffeine Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children 4–6 years old</td>
<td>45 mg caffeine per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 7–9 years old</td>
<td>62.5 mg caffeine per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 10–12 years old</td>
<td>85 mg caffeine per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenagers 13–19 years old</td>
<td>2.5 mg caffeine per kg body weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 20 years +</td>
<td>( \leq 400 ) mg caffeine per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the amount of caffeine in 1 cup (250 mL) of brewed coffee is about 135 mg caffeine.*

For more information see the section on caffeine in the **Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches** pages 72–75.
Energy drinks

- Energy drinks often contain a lot of sugar and caffeine. A 473 mL Energy Drink has 14 tsp. (56 g) of sugar. If a student had 1 energy drink (473 mL) every day for a whole year, they would have consumed 45 pounds (20.5 kg) of added sugar.

- The caffeine in energy drinks can come from different sources. Natural sources of caffeine include tea leaves, coffee beans, yerba mate, guarana seeds, and kola nuts. Caffeine may also be directly added to energy drinks. The amount of caffeine from all sources must be on the label.

- Due to the health effects of caffeine, Health Canada has set daily limits for caffeine intake for different age groups. The amount of caffeine in energy drinks may be higher than the limit for children and youth. For example, some energy drinks have as much as 180 mg of caffeine per serving.

- Energy drinks should be avoided by children, youth and teens.

For more information on energy drinks, see the Energy Drink Buzz handout and pages 72, 97 and 109 of the Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches resource on the www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca website.

For information on hydration before, during and after activity, see pages 31 to 44 in the Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches or the What to Drink Before, During and After Activity module.

Table 3 is an overview chart of the sugar content for the drinks. For photos of these drinks and activities, see the Sugar Shocker Education Kit online at: www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-sugar-shocker-kit.pdf
### Table 3: Average Amount of Added Sugar in Drinks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Average Added Sugar Content (teaspoons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choose Most Often</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>1 cup (250 mL)</td>
<td>0 tsp (0 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% milk</td>
<td>1 cup (250 mL)</td>
<td>0 tsp (0 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened soy-beverage (calcium &amp; vitamin D fortified)</td>
<td>1 cup (250 mL)</td>
<td>0 tsp (0 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% orange juice, unsweetened</td>
<td>½ cup (250 mL)</td>
<td>0 tsp (0 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choose Sometimes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate milk &amp; flavoured soy beverage (calcium &amp; vitamin D fortified)</td>
<td>1 cup (250 mL)</td>
<td>4 tsp (20 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choose Least Often</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin enhanced water</td>
<td>about 2 ½ cups (591 mL)</td>
<td>8 tsp (40 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetened iced tea</td>
<td>about 1 ½ cups (355 mL)</td>
<td>8 tsp (40 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular pop, 1 can</td>
<td>about 1 ½ cups (355 mL)</td>
<td>10 tsp (50 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports drink</td>
<td>about 2 ¾ cups (710 mL)</td>
<td>10 tsp (50 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iced coffee slush (with milk)</td>
<td>about 1 2/3 cups (414 mL)</td>
<td>12 tsp (60 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy drink</td>
<td>about 1 ¾ cups (473 mL)</td>
<td>14 tsp (70 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit flavoured drink</td>
<td>about 2 ½ cups (591 mL)</td>
<td>18 tsp (90 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice slush</td>
<td>about 4 ¾ cups (1.18 L)</td>
<td>36 tsp (180 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain pop</td>
<td>about 7 2/3 cups (1.9 L)</td>
<td>57 tsp (285 mL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sugar Shocker Education Kit

### Materials for athletes

These supporting handouts that you can share with your athletes and parents can be found on the following pages:

- Healthy Drinks, Healthy Kids
- The Energy Drink Buzz
- Sports Drinks
Healthy Drinks, Healthy Kids

Drinks help children and youth to get the fluids they need to keep their bodies working well.

How much do 2–18 year olds need to drink?

Different amounts of fluid are needed depending on age and gender. See the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Recommended amount of fluid to drink daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3</td>
<td>4 cups (900 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–8</td>
<td>5 cups (1200 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–13</td>
<td>6 cups (1600 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14–18</td>
<td>7 cups (1800 mL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes a child may need to drink more fluid. This includes; in hot weather, when they’re active, or not feeling well. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

Everyday drinks

Water and milk can be enjoyed every day. Offer water most. Serve milk or a fortified soy beverage every day as recommended by Canada’s Food Guide.

Water
Offer water during the day to meet fluid needs and to quench thirst.

- Plain water without anything added is best.
- A child can refill a personal water bottle all day long.

Milk or fortified soy beverages
Try offering milk at meals or snacks. Children and youth need 2 cups (500 mL) of milk (skim, 1%, 2%) or fortified soy beverage every day. These drinks provide protein, calcium, and vitamin D. 9–18 year olds may drink more milk to help them get the nutrients they need.

If choosing soy beverage as a milk alternative, read the Nutrition Facts table on the label and choose one that provides:

- at least 30% Daily Value (DV) of calcium and vitamin D
- less than 10 grams of sugar per 1 cup (250 mL)
- at least 6 grams of protein per 1 cup (250 mL)
Sometimes drinks

These drinks have higher amounts of sugar (natural and/or added) and may be lower in some nutrients. Sometimes drinks may have some nutrients, but water, milk, and fortified soy beverages are healthier choices.

Flavoured milks or flavoured fortified soy beverages
Flavoured milks and fortified soy beverages, such as chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, or other flavours have the same nutrients as milk or fortified soy beverage, but contain added sugar.

100% juice
Offer vegetables and fruit to eat instead of juice because:
- vegetables and fruit contain fibre
- 100% vegetable juice may contain added salt
- 100% fruit juice is high in natural sugars
If offering juice, limit to ½ cup (125 mL) per day.

Coconut water
Coconut water is not the same as water because it contains different amounts of minerals like sodium and potassium. Some types of coconut water have 100% fruit juice, fruit puree, or sugar added.

Plant-based beverages
Beverages made from plants such as rice, almond, coconut, oat, potato, and hemp may be fortified or enriched with calcium and vitamin D. These are not considered a milk alternative like fortified soy beverage because they are much lower in protein and energy than cow’s milk.

If offering a plant based beverage, read the Nutrition Facts table on the label and choose one that provides:
- at least 30% Daily Value (DV) of calcium and vitamin D
- less than 10 grams of sugar per 1 cup (250 mL)
- at least 6 grams of protein per 1 cup (250 mL)

Drinks to limit

These drinks are not healthy choices because they are low in nutrients, high in sugar and/or fat, and may contain caffeine or sugar substitutes.

Fruit drinks, iced tea, pop, or slushes
These drinks may be high in added sugars or contain sugar substitutes. A fruit “ade”, “beverage”, “cocktail”, “drink”, or “punch”, may have little or no actual fruit juice.

Iced tea, pop and slushes may contain caffeine. Pop has acids in it that can weaken tooth enamel.

Vitamin waters
Vitamin waters are flavoured waters with added vitamins, minerals, caffeine, herbs, sugars or sugar substitutes. Healthy food and drinks contain the same vitamins and minerals added to these drinks. Choosing healthy food will provide these nutrients, plus many more.
Sports drinks
Sports drinks contain sugar, added sodium, and potassium. They are not needed for most activities. **Water is the best choice during and after regular activity.** For information on when a sports drink might be needed and how to choose one, go to [www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) and search for: “Sports Nutrition”.

Energy drinks
Energy drinks are **not recommended** for children and youth because of their high levels of caffeine and sugar, as well as other added ingredients, such as vitamins and herbs. For more information visit [www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) and search for: “The Energy Drink Buzz”.

Specialty coffee and tea drinks
Many hot and cold coffee or tea drinks are made with flavoured milk, cream or whipped topping, and syrups, making them higher in fat and sugar. They may also contain caffeine or sugar substitutes.

How to choose a drink
When choosing a drink look for one with:
- no added sugars,
- no caffeine,
- no sugar substitutes,
- lower amounts of naturally occurring sugars.

Sugar
A child who drinks lower sugar drinks has less risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight. Children and youth at an unhealthy weight may have a higher chance of getting some types of cancers, heart disease, or type 2 diabetes.

Choose healthy foods and drinks instead of drinks with higher amounts of natural or added sugar. Some names for sugar on the drinks’ ingredient list are:
- cane juice/extract
- corn syrup/solids
- dextrose
- fructose
- fruit juice, purées, and concentrates
- glucose
- honey
- liquid sugar
- maltose
- molasses
- sucrose
- syrup

Caffeine
Caffeine is found in coffee-based drinks, energy drinks, tea, iced tea, pop, and other drinks. Some side effects of caffeine are; nervousness, faster heart rate, and problems sleeping. Choose drinks without caffeine. Caffeinated drinks are often high in sugar and low in nutrients. Visit [www.healthycanadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca) and search for “Caffeine and Kids” for more information.

Sugar substitutes
Drinks sweetened with sugar substitutes often have few nutrients and may take the place of healthy food and drinks. Sugar substitutes are not recommended for children unless a healthcare provider suggests them. Some names of sugar substitutes on the drinks’ ingredient list are:
- acesulfame potassium
- aspartame
- polydextrose
- sorbitol
- stevia
- sucralose
- xylitol
Read the product label

Use the ingredient list and Nutrition Facts table to compare drinks.

**Ingredient list:**
Check the ingredient list to see if there is added sugar, caffeine, or sugar substitutes. Ingredients are listed in order of what was used the most to what was used the least to make the product.

**Ingredients:** carbonated water, glucose-fructose, sugar, sodium citrate, caffeine

**Nutrition Facts table:**
Read the Nutrition Facts table to find the serving size and the grams of sugar in the serving. Grams of sugar include naturally occurring and/or added sugars. 4 grams of sugar is about 1 tsp of sugar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Nutrition Facts</strong></th>
<th>Per 250 mL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount</strong></td>
<td>% Daily Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories 140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Trans 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol mg</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium 20 mg</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate 35 g</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sugars 35 g</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein 0 g</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare products and choose the one with less sugar. The drink above has 35 grams or about 9 tsp of sugar in 1 cup (250 mL).

**Did you know?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Tsp or grams of sugar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Any size = 0 tsp or 0 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>250 mL (1 cup) = 3 tsp or 12 grams (natural sugar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit drink</td>
<td>591 mL bottle = 18 tsp or 72 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin water</td>
<td>591 mL bottle = 8 tsp or 32 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports drink</td>
<td>710 mL bottle = 10 tsp or 40 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy drink</td>
<td>473 mL can = 14 tsp or 56 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iced coffee drink</td>
<td>414 mL = 12 tsp or 48 grams (natural and added sugar)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Energy drinks often claim to give you extra energy, help you to concentrate, and feel alert. Below is information about some of the ingredients in energy drinks.

### Sugar

Energy drinks are high in sugar, with an average of 14 teaspoons (56 grams) of sugar per 473 mL can. Note: 1 tsp (5 mL) = 4 grams of sugar.

This sugar is absorbed quickly and the energy it gives you doesn’t last long. Sugary drinks increase your calorie intake and may cause you to gain weight. They also contribute to tooth decay, especially when sipped over long periods.

Some energy drinks may have sugar substitutes in them. Sugar substitutes aren’t recommended for children and youth unless suggested by a healthcare provider.

### Herbs

Herbs such as gingko biloba or ginseng may be added to energy drinks. The makers of energy drinks may claim that these herbs will help you stay focused or improve your memory, but there is little proof for these claims. The herbs added to energy drinks may affect those with medical conditions and how medicines work.

### B Vitamins

B vitamins, such as riboflavin, niacin, B6, or B12 may also be added to energy drinks. Most people get enough B vitamins from foods such as:

- Meat and Alternatives (e.g., meat, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, lentils)
- Whole grains (e.g., whole grain bread, whole grain cereals, whole grain pasta)

Getting more than the daily recommended amount of B vitamins will not give you more energy. Extra B vitamins leave the body through urine. Taking more than the recommended amounts of vitamins isn’t better for you and could make you sick.

### Caffeine

Caffeine may be added to energy drinks. This caffeine can come from natural or artificial sources. Natural sources of caffeine include tea leaves, coffee beans, yerba mate, guarana seeds, and kola nuts. The amount of caffeine from all sources must be on the label. Some side effects of caffeine are:

- faster heart rate
- cold sweats
- shakes
- diarrhea
- headaches
- nausea
- nervousness
- trouble sleeping

Due to the side effects of caffeine, Health Canada sets recommended maximum daily amounts for caffeine intake. See table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum daily amount of caffeine for children/youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4–6 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–12 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years and older</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For example, the maximum daily caffeine intake for a teen who weighs 55 kg (120 lbs) is 136 mg. Look for the total caffeine listed on the drink label and compare this to your daily suggested maximum.

The amount of caffeine in energy drinks may be higher than the maximum for children and youth. Some energy drinks have as much as 180 mg of caffeine per serving.

### Amino acids

Energy drinks often have added amino acids such as taurine or carnitine. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. You get enough of these amino acids from foods such as:

- Milk and Alternatives (e.g., milk, yogurt, fortified soy beverage, cheese)
- Meat and Alternatives (e.g., meat, fish, poultry, eggs, beans, lentils)

There isn’t enough evidence to prove that adding amino acids to a drink gives a person more energy.
Read the Label

Below is an example of a Nutrition Facts table and ingredient list from an energy drink.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per can (473 mL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riboflavin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niacin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B₆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin B₁₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not a significant source of saturated fat, cholesterol, fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium or iron

High Caffeine Content

Contains (per can)

Caffeine 165 mg

Ingredients: Carbonated water, sucrose, glucose, citric acid, naturally sourced flavours, taurine, sodium citrate, grape skin extract (natural colour), panax ginseng root extract, caffeine, sorbic acid, benzoic acid, niacinamide, sodium chloride, D-glucuronolactone, guarana seed extract, inositol, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vit B6), sucralose, riboflavin (vit B2), maltodextrin, cyanocobalamin (vit B12).

The ingredients are listed by weight from most to least. On the ingredient list above, sucrose and glucose (sugar) are the second and third ingredients. The Nutrition Facts table shows there are 48 g of sugar or about 12 teaspoons in a can.

The % Daily Value tells you if there is:
- a little, 5% or less of a nutrient
- a lot, 15% or more of a nutrient

Even though the vitamins are listed last on the ingredient list, the % Daily Value for vitamins is much higher than recommended.

What else do I need to know?

Energy drinks aren’t the same as sports drinks and shouldn’t be used during exercise. Energy drinks don’t keep you well hydrated. Sports drinks are made to keep athletes hydrated during intense activity that lasts longer than 60 minutes. Sports drinks contain sugar, sodium, and potassium to help fuel muscles and the brain during activity.

For most children and youth, water is the best choice during and after exercise.

Don’t mix energy drinks with alcohol. People who drink alcohol with energy drinks may not feel the effects of alcohol even though their blood alcohol levels are high.

Mixing energy drinks and alcohol may lead to risky situations such as drinking too much alcohol, or drinking and driving.

Energy drinks aren’t recommended for children and youth because of their high levels of caffeine and sugar as well as the other added ingredients.

Due to the high amount of caffeine, added herbal ingredients, vitamins, and sugar, energy drinks aren’t recommended during pregnancy.

There are better ways to boost your energy

- Choose healthy foods from Canada’s Food Guide.
- Drink water when you’re thirsty.
- Follow Canada’s Physical Activity Guidelines to be active.
- Get enough sleep.
Sports Drinks

Why Do Some Athletes Need Sports Drinks?
Sports drinks are designed to replace fluid and electrolytes (sodium and potassium) that the body loses in sweat. Sports drinks also provide carbohydrate to supply energy to the muscles and the brain during long periods of intense activity.

When Do Athletes Need Sports Drinks?
Active people only need to consume sports drinks during intense activity that causes them to sweat a lot for more than an hour. Water is the best choice for events that last less than an hour or involve only moderate levels of activity.

Which Athletes Need Sports Drinks?
Sports drinks can help athletes who:
- sweat a lot while training or competing very hard for more than one hour
- compete or train in a hot and humid climate
- get dehydrated from sweating when they wear thick sports gear (such as hockey and football)

Examples of intense activity include; triathalons, marathons, and long distance running, biking or cross country skiing.

Can Athletes Make Their Own Sports Drink?
Yes! Here is a simple recipe for a sports drink:

Homemade Citrus Sports Drink
Yield: 500 mL (2 cups)

2 Tbsp sugar 30 mL
¼ tsp salt 0.5 mL
2 Tbsp boiling water 30 mL
2 Tbsp orange juice 30 mL
1 Tbsp lemon juice 15 mL
1¾ cup cold water 425 mL

Combine the sugar and salt in a bowl or pitcher. Add boiling water to the salt and sugar mixture and stir until sugar and salt dissolve. Stir in remaining ingredients and chill in fridge until needed.

Tip: Other unsweetened fruit juices can be used instead of orange juice.

*Nutrition information per 250 mL/1 cup: 58 calories, 0 g fat, 155 mg sodium, 42 mg potassium, 15 g carbohydrate, 15 g sugars, 0 g fibre, 0 g protein.

Adapted from Alberta Health Services, Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches

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