

The Truth about Energy Drinks, Sports Drinks and Vitamin Water



Energy Drink
Sports Drink
Vitamin Water



Water



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Confusion abounds when it comes to the best way of hydrating children and adolescents during and after sport and the role of energy drinks, sports drinks and vitamin waters.

Energy drinks containing high caffeine content have caused concern amongst health professionals, particularly when children and adolescents are consuming them at school. Studies have linked excessive caffeine consumption to elevated heart rate, hypertension, anxiety, headaches and interrupted sleep patterns. Also of concern is the substitution of these drinks for milk based drinks at a time in their lives when calcium is needed for growing bodies. Caffeine is also a diuretic and can therefore increase the chances of dehydration.

Sports drinks and vitamin waters are promoted as being better than water for young children and adolescents. The truth is that the average child athlete can and should get all the necessary nutrients and hydration from eating healthy foods and drinking plenty of water before, during and after exercise. Sports drinks and vitamin waters may be of benefit to a child who is participating in intense periods of physical activity lasting over one hour. However, it is worth noting that many of these drinks contain added kilojoules which may increase a child's risk of weight gain as well as excess salt and high levels of acid which can erode tooth enamel.

There is little doubt that water is the best drink for children and adolescents, not the highly publicised energy and sports drinks that promote better performance and longer lasting energy. A child should believe in their own ability to perform and not rely on drinks containing large amounts of caffeine, added vitamins and minerals and excess sugar to give them 'the edge'.

Information sourced from Nutrition Australia, Children's Memorial Hospital and Drug Info, for more information see links below:

http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/Food_Facts/FAQ/caffeine_and_energy_drinks.asp

www.druginfo.adf.org.au/download.aspx?RelatedLinkID=675

<http://www.childrensmemorial.org/depts/sportsmedicine/sports-drinks-hydration.aspx>