



Caffeine and Energy Drinks

Should students limit caffeinated drinks?

The major health concern surrounding 'energy' drinks is their high caffeine content.

Caffeine is an addictive substance that can affect the heart and nervous system. While it may temporarily help you overcome symptoms such as tiredness and restore alertness, it can have other negative side effects, especially in children and adolescents.

Negative or adverse effects of caffeine can include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Insomnia
- Nervousness
- Headache
- Rapid heart rate
- Anxiety

Due to their smaller body weight, children are at greater risk than adults of developing these adverse symptoms if they continue to have regular intake of even small amounts of caffeinated drinks.

Impact of Caffeine on Body Weight in Adults and Children:

Children – **2.6mg caffeine per kg** (average weight = 30kg)

Adults – **1.1mg caffeine per kg** (average weight = 70kg)

Therefore caffeine has more than **twice the impact** on children than it does on adults.

Energy Drinks have high amounts of caffeine and sugar, placing them in unhealthy food categories under the food and drink strategies for school canteens – such as the Smart Choices Strategy in QLD. They may also contain other additives, such as B Vitamins, guarana, taurine, ephedrine and ginseng which act as stimulants.

Energy drinks are low in nutrition value and high in kilojoules, and they may have harmful effects on children and adolescents including increasing risk of excessive weight gain, increasing heart rate and increasing anxiety. Reducing the intake of energy drinks is important for general health and wellbeing. The best drink to hydrate the body is WATER.

Energy drinks contain around 160-300mg caffeine per 500ml serve

600ml Cola contains 80mg per bottle

Coffee contains 40-80mg per 180ml cup

Tea contains 20-60mg per 180ml cup

Tuckshop/canteen staff, teachers and principals should use information about energy drinks to work with students to improve their understanding and knowledge of these products, their impact on health and ways to encourage better drink choices.

Parents need to support the school's policy to provide healthier food and drinks.