

Hey kids, just say no to energy drinks

February 9 2018



(HealthDay)—Highly caffeinated energy drinks aren't safe for children and teens, and should not be marketed to them, a leading sports medicine organization warns.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) on Friday released an official statement about the beverages.

"Energy drinks are extremely popular, and concerns about their consumption are coming from every sector of society, which is why we've published these recommendations," said Dr. John Higgins. He's an associate professor of medicine at the University of Texas McGovern Medical School in Houston.

Children and teens appear to be at particularly high risk of complications from energy drinks because of their smaller body size, and potentially heavy and frequent use, according to the statement.

The warning applies to beverages like Red Bull and Full Throttle. The fact that they are not meant for [children](#) needs to be emphasized and widely publicized, the group stated.

"Our review of the available science showed that excessive levels of caffeine found in energy drinks can have adverse effects on cardiovascular, neurological, gastrointestinal, renal and endocrine systems, as well as psychiatric symptoms," Higgins said in an ACSM news release.

"More needs to be done to protect children and adolescents, as well as adults with cardiovascular or other medical conditions," he added.

Among the group's recommendations:

- Stop marketing to at-risk groups, especially children. This includes marketing energy drinks at sporting events involving children and teens.
- Do not consume energy drinks before, during or after intense exercise. Some deaths linked with energy drinks occurred when a

person consumed energy drinks before and/or after vigorous activity.

- Educate consumers about the differences between soda, coffee, [sports drinks](#) and energy drinks. Energy drink education should be included in school nutrition, health and wellness classes.

Doctors should discuss energy drink use with their patients. And [health care providers](#) are also urged to report any harmful side effects to watchdog agencies, such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Poison Control Centers.

The statement, which also called for more research into the safety of [energy drinks](#), was published Feb. 9 in the journal *Current Sports Medicine Reports*.

The American College of Sports Medicine is said to be the largest [sports medicine](#) and exercise science organization in the world.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [energy drinks](#).

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Citation: Hey kids, just say no to energy drinks (2018, February 9) retrieved 3 January 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-02-hey-kids-energy.html>

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