



**simcoe  
muskoka**  
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

15 Sperling Drive,  
Barrie, ON L4M 6K9  
*Your Health Connection*



# Health MATTERS

August 2013

## Energy drinks – more buzz than benefit

*This quick “wake me up” may have effects on your health and the health of your children*

If you haven't heard of them before, all it takes is a walk into a convenience store and behold: the energy drink cooler. It is full of bright, colourful cans in many flavours with names that invoke a feeling of invincibility and stamina.

Energy drink ads feature extreme-sport athletes surrounded by attractive, active young people playing in environments full of danger, excitement and good times.

Sound enticing? Many young people have been drawn by the lure. Energy drink sales bring in billions of dollars globally. The number one consumer is youth. In the 2011 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey of Grade 7 to 12 students, half reported using high-caffeine energy drinks in the previous year.



### Nutrition

Energy drinks provide little, if any, nutritional value. They may contain high amounts of caffeine, herbal ingredients and sugar, possibly replacing other good nutrients. Even small cans of energy drink have about the same caffeine as a large coffee. And they're high in sugar – about 13 ½ packets' worth per can.

- ◆ Read the labels of all foods, including energy drinks.
- ◆ Be aware that added herbal ingredients may interact with medications. Make sure to speak with your pharmacist about energy drinks and your prescriptions.

Energy drinks are not the same as sports drinks like Gatorade or Powerade. Sports drinks rehydrate the body and replace nutrients

- ▶ Keeping your baby close ..... 2
- ▶ Happy tummies for children ..... 3
- ▶ The dollars and sense of good health ..... 4

during physical activity of high intensity or long duration. Energy drinks should not be used before or during physical activity. The carbonation and high sugar content can interfere with proper hydration. In most cases, drinking plenty of water is the best way to stay hydrated.

### Energy drinks and alcohol

It's now become popular to mix alcohol and caffeine together; some beverage producers offer pre-mixed “coolers.” These can be more dangerous than drinking alcohol alone. The caffeine keeps you awake and may increase the likelihood of drinking over a longer period of time and consuming more alcohol than intended. Compared to drinking only alcohol, mixing alcohol and caffeine increases the chance you may suffer from alcohol poisoning, be injured, or make poor decisions.

### Safe for some, but not all

For healthy adults, moderate use of energy drinks has generally not led to problems. However, they are not recommended for children, adolescents, pregnant or breastfeeding women or caffeine-sensitive people. If you are a parent or caregiver, talk to the youth in your life about the facts around energy drinks. If you are a store owner, consider refusing to sell energy drinks to children. Recreation centre operators and management need to consider their clientele when deciding whether to sell energy drinks in their facilities.

For more information, visit Health Canada's website at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca).



## Keeping your baby close



*New research is beginning to confirm what nature knew all along*

Holding a newborn baby close in uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact right after birth has benefits for both mother and child.

### What is skin-to-skin contact?

It's something mothers and babies can do right after birth. Skin-to-skin contact is especially beneficial in the first hour following the birth of the baby. It's also important during the weeks following birth.

When a baby is held bare, wearing only a diaper, right against the bare chest of the mother, it helps create a connection – an unseen bond between mother and child. The baby feels her skin, hears her voice, and gets to know her scent. In these ways, the baby gets to know love and feel comforted right after the stress and trauma of childbirth. This contact has many health benefits for babies and mothers.

### Babies

- ◆ Helps regulate the baby's temperature, breathing, heart rate, and blood sugar levels right after birth.
- ◆ Calms the baby and reduces stress hormones, which can be high following a long labour and delivery.
- ◆ Helps the baby's natural instincts for breastfeeding; when placed this way most babies will seek the breast and start to feed without help.

### Mothers

- ◆ Increases the mother's natural hormonal responses to her baby, reducing bleeding after birth and helping her feel connected to her baby.
- ◆ Provides the time mothers need to get to know their baby.

Fathers and other caregivers can also provide skin-to-skin care, and by doing so they will undoubtedly feel a greater connection to their new baby.

### Enhancing breastfeeding success

- ◆ Babies are more likely to have a successful first breastfeed.
- ◆ Babies may breastfeed sooner and longer.
- ◆ Mothers will make more breast milk.
- ◆ Babies can more easily breastfeed when sleepy.

In Canada, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year the first week of October. Many local communities host events such as breastfeeding challenges during that week.

### Skin-to-skin is easy

- ◆ Take off your baby's blankets and clothing. Leave a diaper on.
- ◆ Move clothing away from your chest and tummy.
- ◆ Hold your baby, facing you, against your chest or tummy.
- ◆ You can put a blanket over you and your baby, keeping baby's face uncovered.
- ◆ Enjoy the closeness and bonding with your baby.

Parents may need to ask their caregiver in hospital for help in providing this skin-to-skin care after giving birth. It can be done immediately, even if a caesarean was performed or sutures were required. For low birth weight or premature babies, it can be especially important as it helps them to adjust to life outside the womb.



# Happy tummies for children

*Serving food for little ones? Learn to recognize the mistakes that cause food poisoning*

Whether you're a mom, a grandparent, a nanny or a daycare provider, having little ones in your care can be fun – but it's also a huge responsibility. Not only do you have to worry about normal childhood illnesses, injury prevention and healthy eating, but food safety is a key concern. Children age 5 and under are at an increased risk of complications from food poisoning.

Food poisoning in young children can lead to dehydration and can range from mild to severe illness. Symptoms include:

- ◆ stomach ache,
- ◆ vomiting,
- ◆ diarrhea,
- ◆ fever/chills.

Young children exposed to some strains of E. coli bacteria can develop a type of kidney failure and blood disorder that can be fatal. To prevent this illness it is extremely important to cook ground beef to at least 71C (160F), which kills bacteria such as E. coli, salmonella and listeria. Juices should run clear. Use a thermometer and the cooking chart at right to ensure foods are cooked to their proper and safe internal temperature.

## Prevention

If you have any children age 5 and under in your care, how you properly store, handle and cook food is important to ensure the food they are eating is safe. Follow these steps at home or in a facility.

- ◆ Use a food thermometer: You cannot tell if a food has reached its proper internal temperature just by looking at it.
- ◆ Store foods properly (raw meat separately from fruits and vegetables) at temperatures outside the danger zone. Refrigerator 4C (40F), Freezer -18C (0F).
- ◆ Always help young children wash their hands before they eat and after they use the toilet, after a visit to a petting zoo or farm or after handling pets.
- ◆ Use different cutting boards and knives to keep meat separate from your vegetables and fruit.
- ◆ Wash and sanitize all utensils and surfaces.
- ◆ Wash reusable grocery bags often.



**Internal cooking temperatures**

FOOD	TEMPERATURE		
Beef, veal and lamb (pieces and whole cuts)	<b>63°C</b>	(145°F)	Medium rare
	<b>71°C</b>	(160°F)	Medium
	<b>77°C</b>	(170°F)	Well done
Ground meat and meat mixtures (for example, burgers, sausages, meatballs, meatloaf, casseroles)	<b>71°C</b>	(160°F)	Beef, veal, lamb and pork
	<b>74°C</b>	(165°F)	Poultry
Poultry (for example, chicken, turkey, duck)	<b>74°C</b>	(165°F)	Pieces
	<b>85°C</b>	(185°F)	Whole
Pork (pieces and whole cuts)	<b>71°C</b>	(160°F)	
Egg dishes	<b>74°C</b>	(165°F)	
Others (for example, hot dogs, stuffing, leftovers, seafood)	<b>74°C</b>	(165°F)	

- ◆ Do not give honey to a baby under one year old; it can cause a serious type of food poisoning called infant botulism.

## Additional Tips

- ◆ Do not let children touch raw meat, poultry or fish.
- ◆ Do not serve raw alfalfa or bean sprouts to your children. Raw sprouts have been linked to outbreaks of salmonella and E. coli infection. Cooked sprouts are safe to eat.
- ◆ Never give your child foods containing raw eggs (e.g. cookie dough, cake batter).
- ◆ Serve only pasteurized milk and juice to your child.

For more information on all food safety information including safe food handling during shopping, safe internal cooking temperature charts or more tips, download a copy of Health Canada's Food safety information for children ages 5 and under at [www.healthycanadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca) or visit the health unit's website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)





# The dollars and sense of good health

*People are often surprised to learn that basics like home, good work, family, friends and independence play an important role in a long and healthy life*



The quality of our health is affected by more than our lifestyle choices or access to health care. It is largely influenced by the social and economic conditions we experience, such as our income, level of education, housing situation and employment. These factors are referred to as the social determinants of health. We now know that health improves at every rung upwards on the income and social ladder, which means our health is affected not just by our ability to access health care, but by many other factors in our lives.

## Poverty creates poor health

According to the World Health Organization, poverty is the most important determinant affecting health. For people living in poverty, it can be a critical factor in their well-being throughout life. In Simcoe and Muskoka, the rates of diabetes and cardiovascular disease are higher among residents with low income than among those who have higher income. Those with low incomes are less likely to rate their health as excellent or very good, and their life expectancy is lower.

The issue of poverty is complex. The root causes of poverty are often very systemic, unfair, unjust and beyond the control of the individual. It is possible, however, to improve the health of individuals living in poverty by making community-wide improvements to the factors that contribute to poverty or create avoidable differences in health and quality of life.

## A community-wide effort

Everyone in a community can play a part in changing the inequalities that can harm health. We can do this as individuals by helping a neighbour or volunteering; as business people by considering our business practices; or as agencies by creating practices and policies that support improvements in society. Together we can create a community that is inclusive and improves the health of those most in need.

One decision a community can make is to provide stable housing to those in need. Some research has shown that the cost of opening apartments to homeless people with serious mental illness would be about the same as referring them to shelters and crisis care. It would also give them a real improvement in quality of life.

## What you can do

You can find your own inspiration to spark change by watching the health unit's "Let's Start a Conversation" video on the health unit's website. Keep ideas flowing by talking about what makes us healthy with family and friends, work colleagues and elected officials.

We all do better when everyone in our community experiences good health. We all have a role to play. Let's talk about ways we can collectively work to improve the conditions that affect our health.



printed on  
recycled paper

**HEALTH MATTERS** is published several times a year by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Articles may be reproduced in full provided the source is acknowledged. Got questions about any of the features in Health Matters? Other concerns? Call Your Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You'll also see related information at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).