

What's In It For Me?

Sugary Drinks Learning Activity

Action Schools! BC



Teens and young adults are a key target market for advertisers of energy drinks and pop. In order to become informed consumers, students will identify and critically analyse the nutrition information commonly displayed on labels for energy drinks and pop, along with the marketing techniques used by companies to sell these products.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



BIG IDEAS

- Healthy choices influence our physical, emotional, and mental well-being.
- Learning about similarities and differences in individuals and groups influences community health.

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

- Investigate and analyze influences on eating habits.
- Identify factors that influence healthy choices and explain their potential health effects.
- Reflect on outcomes of personal healthy-living goals and assess strategies used.
- Explore strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community.
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others.

CONTENT

- Factors that influence personal eating choices.
- Sources of health information.



FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH CONNECTIONS



RELATIONSHIPS AND ENVIRONMENTS

- Students and staff encourage each other to drink water throughout the day. Invite other classrooms to have water available for students throughout the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching students about the amount of added sugar in common drinks in order to provide an opportunity for awareness around healthier drink choices.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Invite an Elder in to speak about the special significance that water has with First Peoples.

OUR SCHOOL POLICIES

- Challenge the staff and rest of the school to make bring-your-own water bottle to school an overarching policy at school.

PREPARATION

- Review the *Sugary Drink and Media Awareness* section of the *Healthy Eating Overview, Educator Backgrounder*, and *What's in it For Me?* handout (included with this activity).
- Prepare *What's in it For Me?* overhead (included with this activity), or copy the same for each student as a handout.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- Gather the students in a circle to begin this inquiry. Circles represent important principles in the First Peoples worldview and belief systems, especially interconnectedness, equality, and continuity - <http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/circletalks.html>. Begin with an inquiry question: Do marketers target children and youth?
- Share with students marketing techniques that are aimed at children and youth:
 - Child-size options in restaurants (e.g., smaller size hot chocolate) to gain customer loyalty at a young age.
 - Children's advertising that is presented as entertainment, with marketing messages incorporated into cellphone ringtones, apps, toys, activity books, movies, cartoons, music videos, websites, videogames, contests in schools, and more.
 - Companies sponsor events and partner with community groups. These agreements often require the company's logo on event banners, advertisements, and athletic uniforms. There may also be links to the company website on all internet postings for the event.
 - Athletes who win sporting events are seen holding press conferences and doing interviews while wearing clothing with the logo of their sponsoring company and drinking their products.
 - Product websites often include games, contests, rewards programs for products, and trips. Many sites collect your information without your awareness. This information helps companies further adapt marketing techniques to target their audience.
- Display the *What's in it For Me?* handout on Smart Board (or provide students with same as handout). Have a guided discussion about the sample drink products. In collaborative groups, have students work together to complete the *What's in it For Me?* handout.
- Ask students to consider what the potential is for energy drinks and pop to affect mental well-being, especially since these are frequently marketed to children and youth (e.g., behaviour changes; excitable to irritable, headaches, increase in anxiety, and insomnia).

EXTENSION OF LEARNING

- Have a guided discussion about the marketing techniques used by companies. Ask students if they can provide examples of advertising used by food or drink companies.
 - Q:** What effect did those advertisements have on their behaviour?
 - Did it make them want to buy the product?
 - Do they think that spending money on marketing and advertising is effective?
 - Q:** Do they think that the claims on vitamin and energy drinks are true (e.g., that they "boost physical and mental energy", "improve your immune system", etc.)?
- Have students use the *Food and Drink Advertisement Journal* to track the food or drink ads they see for a day - (www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources).
 - Have students explore how the sugar and acid in sweet drinks, such as energy drinks and pop, attack and weaken your teeth over time, eventually causing cavities to form. This can be supported through the "Tooth" Experiments (part 1 and 2) in the Sip Smart! BC™ resource.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



- Sip Smart! BC™ (<http://www.bcpeds.ca/Programs/sipsmart.aspx?MenuID=3347>)
- HealthLink BC (www.healthlinkbc.ca)
 - Call 811 and speak with a registered dietitian
- Energy Drinks (<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/energy-drinks>)
- Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition (<http://stopmarketingtokids.ca/>)

EDUCATOR BACKGROUND

Caffeine is a mildly addictive stimulant drug that stimulates the central nervous system and can cause side effects such as: irritability and restlessness, difficulty concentrating, and an increased need to urinate.

Caffeine occurs naturally in some drinks (coffee, tea and hot chocolate) and is added to others (cola and energy drinks).

Nutrition labels rarely include the amount of caffeine contained in a food product. Some of the ingredients indicating the presence of caffeine in a food or drink include: coffee or coffee beans, green or black tea leaves, guarana, yerba/yerba mate, and cocoa beans.

Health professionals suggest that children aged 7-12 get no more than 65-85 mg of caffeine each day, as even low levels of caffeine can affect most children's behaviour. Withdrawal symptoms may be felt by children consuming even small amounts of caffeine. Symptoms may include headaches, irritability and restlessness.

Beverages high in caffeine like energy drinks are not recommended for children and teens.

Adapted from: Sip Smart! BC™

ANSWER KEY: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? HANDOUT

1. How many grams of sugar are in the entire container?

A: 54 g or 13.5 cubes of sugar/591 ml

2. Why do companies use a 250 ml serving size when the container is 591 ml?

A: Companies want their products to appear as having less calories and sugar.

3. Do you think that most people drink the whole 591 ml bottle?

A: Most people drink the whole bottle.

NOTE: Canada's labelling rules state that the entire package is considered to be the serving size if it could reasonably be consumed by one person at a single sitting.

4. How much caffeine is in this product?

A: Caffeine is included in the list of ingredients, but the label doesn't always indicate how much. A number of ingredients that are part of these drinks have caffeine in them, including "yerba mate", "guarana", and "black tea". Caffeine from these natural sources is not always included in the amount listed on the label or company website. Generally, the caffeine content can be found on the internet. The maximum recommended amount of caffeine for children 7 to 9 years is 62.5 mg per day; for 10 to 12 year olds this maximum amount is 85 mg per day. Caffeine guidelines haven't been set for teens, but some sources suggest a maximum of 2 mg per kg body weight.

5. What nutrients does this product provide?

A: Carbohydrates and sodium.

NAME _____

What's In It For Me?

"Cool Cola" Pop, 591 ml Container

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive

Per 250 ml
pour 250 ml

Amount Teneur		% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	110	
Fat / Lipides	0 g	0%
Saturated / saturés	0 g	0%
+ Trans / trans	0 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol	0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium	10 mg	1%
Carbohydrate / Glucides	28 g	9%
Fibre / Fibres	0 g	0%
Sugars / Sucres	23 g	
Protein / Protéines	0.1 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A		0%
Vitamin C / Vitamine C		0%
Calcium / Calcium		0%
Iron / Fer		0%

COOL COLA LABEL

Ingredients: carbonated water, sugar/glucose-fructose, caramel colour, phosphoric acid, natural flavours, caffeine



- 1 How many grams of sugar is in the entire container? (HINT: look at the serving size compared to the bottle size). _____
- 2 Why do companies use a 250 ml serving size when the container is 591 ml? _____

- 3 Do you think that most people drink the whole 591 ml container? NOTE: Canada's labelling rules state that the entire package is considered to be the serving size if it could reasonably be consumed by one person at a single sitting. _____
- 4 How much caffeine is in this product? _____
- 5 What nutrients does this product provide? _____

SUGARY DRINKS OVERVIEW

This section of the *Healthy Eating Overview* will explain what is meant by ‘sugary drinks’, provide tips and tools for assessing popular drinks and share information relating to the levels of caffeine found in many of these drinks. Find the complete *Healthy Eating Overview* at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources.

KEY MESSAGES

Some drinks don’t fit into the four food groups in *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* or *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis*.

- Sugar is a major ingredient in many popular drinks.
- Knowing what is in drinks helps us to make healthy choices.
- The number and size of servings we drink affects the amount of sugar we consume.
- Drinking sugary drinks “bumps out” nutritious drinks.
- Some ingredients in sugary drinks other than sugar, such as acid and caffeine, may damage our health.
- Drink choices can be influenced by various factors, including family, friends, and the media.
- We can decide for ourselves to make healthy drink choices.
- Drink water – it’s always a great choice!

Adapted from: Sip Smart! BC™

What Are Sugary Drinks?

Added Sugars



- Sugary drinks are drinks (carbonated or not) that contain added sugars. These can include:
- Pop or soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Hot chocolate
- Store-bought smoothies
- Slushes
- Fruity drinks (e.g., “punches”, “cocktails”, or “ades”)
- Sports drinks
- Flavoured or vitamin-enhanced waters

Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to drinks or food during processing (e.g., sugars added to soda by the manufacturer) or preparation (e.g., sugars added to a cup of coffee after it was bought at the coffee shop). Sugary drinks often have little to no nutritional value. For examples, children and adolescents who drink pop regularly are more likely to have lower intakes of calcium and other nutrients.

Sugary drinks are heavily marketed, available in many locations, and often displayed at the eye level of children. These drinks can contribute to unhealthy weight, which puts a child at increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and other health problems. A healthy weight, on the other hand, supports the mental, physical and social health and well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Naturally Occurring Sugars

Naturally occurring sugars are no different from added sugars in terms of their effects on the body. However, because drinks with naturally occurring sugars often contain important nutrients, they can be consumed in moderation as part of healthy eating. Some drinks with naturally occurring sugar are 100% fruit juice (contains fructose), and plain milk (contains lactose).

Hidden Sugars



Hidden sugars are other names for added sugars that might not sound or look like sugar. These include: sucrose, dextrose, maltose, galactose, liquid glucose-fructose, invert sugar, raw cane sugar, brown sugar, corn sweetener, high-fructose corn syrup, rice syrup, fruit juice concentrates, honey, malt syrup, and molasses.

Juice and Fruity Drinks



The difference between 100% fruit juices and “fruity drinks” (e.g., “fruit beverages”, “fruit drinks”, “fruit cocktails”) can be a difficult concept for students to grasp, but is a very important teaching point. Although the majority of added sugar consumed by students often comes from these drinks, they – and often their parents – may not know the difference between 100% fruit juice and fruity drinks.

100% fruit juice contains some of the natural vitamins (such as vitamin C, potassium and B-vitamins) found in fruit. However, fruit juice still contains a lot of concentrated sugar, and has the same effect on teeth as other sugary drinks. For this reason, children should have no more than 1 serving (125ml, 1/2 cup) of 100% fruit juice daily. A healthier alternative to 100% fruit juice would be a glass of water and a piece of fresh fruit, which provides all the vitamins, minerals, and fibre naturally present, but with much less sugar. Juice is not a necessary part of a healthy diet. Fruits and vegetables are!

What About Artificial Sweeteners?



In keeping with the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools, drinks sweetened with artificial sweeteners such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium and sucralose are not allowed for sale in elementary and middle schools. Just like sugary drinks, artificially sweetened drinks get children used to sweet-tasting, non-nutritious items. They provide none of the nutrients that a child’s growing body needs to be healthy and strong, and can bump healthy foods and drinks out of a child’s diet. These drinks may also contain artificial sweeteners in amounts that exceed the acceptable daily intake (ADI) for children.

Energy Drinks



Energy drinks contain as much or more added sugar than cola, are high or very high in caffeine, and often contain potentially harmful additives. Energy drinks are often marketed with images of extreme sports such as competitive downhill skiing, biking, snowboarding and skateboarding, with the implication that these drinks boost performance. Others, with flashy packaging and enticing names are designed to directly target the youth market.

Energy drinks are very high not only in sugar, but also in caffeine. For example, a 500mL can of a typical energy drink contains 160mg of caffeine. That is more than double the suggested daily caffeine maximum for a 7-12 year-old child.

Many energy drinks also contain stimulant herbs or other substances such as guarana and taurine. These additives are often listed misleadingly as “medicinal ingredients” on energy drinks, when in fact they are untested and potentially harmful, especially for children. Like sports drinks, energy drinks also tend to contain artificial flavours and/or colours.

When consumed in large amounts, or when combined with alcohol, energy drinks have been linked to serious health effects such as irregular heart function, nausea and vomiting, and electrolyte disturbances. Energy drinks can also interact with some medications.¹

Milk, Flavoured Milk and Other Beverages Made With Milk



Milk and milk alternatives (e.g., unsweetened fortified soy beverage) are the main source of calcium and Vitamin D in most Canadian diets. Both calcium and vitamin D help build and maintain strong bones and teeth. Plain milk is also a source of protein, vitamin A and riboflavin.

One cup (250mL) of plain milk = 1 serving from the Milk and Alternatives food group in *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* and in *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis*. Children aged 4-13 should aim for 2 to 4 Food Guide Servings of Milk and Alternatives each day.

Adding vanilla, chocolate, strawberry and other flavours to plain milk can add a lot of extra sugar. It is best to offer children plain (not flavoured) milk regularly so they learn to enjoy it. If making flavoured milk at home, add a small amount of syrup or powder. Less is best.

Drink water – it's always a great choice!

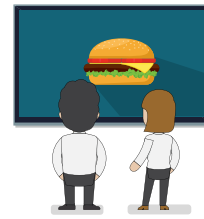
Adapted from: *Sip Smart! BC™*



References:

1. Sip Smart! BC™ (<http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/298/sip-smart-bc>)

HEALTHY EATING OVERVIEW



MEDIA AWARENESS

This section will explain the efforts of industry to market to children and youth. It will provide some insight into how marketing of unhealthy food and drinks affects the choices of children and youth, and will also speak to the Action Schools! BC resource, *Being Me*.

Marketing is much more than advertising. It includes a wide array of tactics companies use to promote their products, such as: attractive packaging, celebrity endorsements, product placements in movies, cartoons or popular TV shows, sponsorship of kids' sports teams and programs, widespread logo placement, and embedding products, brands or logos within games, videogames or websites.¹

Children are uniquely vulnerable to marketing. Before age five, most children cannot distinguish ads from unbiased programming. Those under eight do not understand the intent of marketing messages and believe what they see. By 10 to 12, children understand that ads are designed to sell products, but they are not always able to be critical of these ads. Given that marketers are aiming to capitalize on children's influence on their own food and drink decisions, it is important that children are given the tools to begin to understand the role of marketing, along with recognition of daily examples of marketing in their own lives.

Marketing directed at children is everywhere. Teaching media awareness to children is one method for helping them understand and evaluate the techniques used by marketers to influence their food and beverage choices. The development of these critical thinking skills is the starting point to empowering children with the knowledge they need to make informed choices that support positive mental and physical health and development.

KEY MESSAGES

- Media awareness helps students develop critical thinking skills and the ability to make informed choices in all areas of their lives.
- Marketers spend billions of dollars creating campaigns and advertisements targeted towards children.
- 61% of popular children's websites market unhealthy food and beverages, and as much as 90% of food and beverages marketed on TV are high in salt, fat, sugar or calories.²
- Food and beverage marketing has an impact on the foods children eat, their food preferences and beliefs, rising rates of childhood obesity, and increased risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.
- Children influence their parents' spending, have their own money to spend, and will eventually become adult consumers.

1. <http://stopmarketingtokids.ca/what-is-marketing-2/>

2. <http://stopmarketingtokids.ca/the-health-context/>

Why Media Awareness?

We are all exposed to a myriad of media experiences, so much so that it has become part of daily life – and largely goes unnoticed, except subconsciously. Statistics Canada reported that the time spent watching TV is decreasing but the time spent on the internet has risen substantially. As new forms of mobile media are introduced, the potential to have both positive and negative effects on the health of children and youth expands. The opportunities for media to have a positive impact on health include access to new information, improving education for more people especially in remote areas, and providing a platform for more people to communicate with each other on important topics.

Marketing influences children’s food and beverage choices and preferences, and therefore their health and development. Media directed at children is everywhere: TV, websites, sponsorships, product placements (e.g., food in movies, candy at grocery store checkouts), clothing, online games for children, cartoon characters, celebrity endorsements, contests, free toys and clubs.

Many factors influence food choices, including taste, price, availability, family meal patterns, peers, nutrition, and food marketing. Most of the marketed foods and beverages are for products high in fat, sugar and salt, which include candy, pop, fast foods, and salty snacks.

Adapted from: Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition and Media Awareness Network

Promoting Healthy Body Image

Being Me: Promoting Positive Body Image – K to 9 is a resource, available at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources, with lessons and activities that are designed to support the development of healthy body image and self-esteem, along with messaging which serves to help prevent disordered eating. It can be beneficial to deliver the lessons from both resources around the same time.

Key Messages

- Consider your values, beliefs, and choice of language about body weight and health.
- Promote healthy activities for every body size.
- Role model positive body image and a healthy lifestyle.
- When you discuss bullying in your classroom, include the topic of teasing individuals for their body weight, shape, or size.
- Teach students how to look at the media and information in it more critically. Often, unrealistic images of beauty are linked with happiness, love, popularity and acceptance.
- Avoid using weight tables or charts and calorie counting in classroom activities. Relying on the number of calories rather than on internal cues of hunger and fullness can lead to over or under eating.

- It is normal for many children to gain weight in advance of a period of rapid growth during puberty. Girls usually have their major growth spurt at 12.5 to 13 years, while boys have theirs at 14 to 14.5 years. Note that these are averages; the rapid growth period varies greatly based on genetics and environmental factors.
- Each person's body is different and we should respect, accept and celebrate these differences.

Recommended Resources

- Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition (www.stopmarketingtokids.ca)
- Dietitians of Canada – Advertising of Food and Beverages to Children: Position of Dietitians of Canada. December 2010 Marketing to children (www.dietitians.ca/marketingtokids)
- Long Live Kids (www.longlivekids.ca)
- Media Smarts (www.mediasmarts.ca)

References

- Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition
- Statistics Canada, 2004
- The Kaiser Family Foundation, *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds* www.kff.org
- Gantz W, Schwartz N, Angelini JR, Rideout V. *Food for thought: Television Food Advertising to Children in the United States*. A Kaiser Family Foundation Report, 2007