# Hydration

Children can get dehydrated quickly. Encourage them to drink often; don't wait for them to say they are thirsty.

Water
Water is the best drink for children at practices and games. Try adding slices of lemon, cucumber or watermelon for a bit of flavour.

Sports drinksSport drinks such as Gatorade™ and PowerAde™ are made for athletes who compete and have been exercising and sweating intensely for more than 90 minutes. They typically contain water, sugar and some electrolytes. Sports drinks are not necessary for children who play community sports.

When children fill up their small stomachs with sugary drinks, they have less room for healthy foods and beverages. Sport drinks:

* Can contribute to weight gain. These drinks may contain sugar and are a source of extra calories.
* Can contribute to tooth decay because of sugar content or acidity.
* Are more expensive than water - the best fluid replacement.

## Energy drinks

Energy drinks such as Red Bull™ or Rock Star™ claim to give you more energy and make you feel more alert. Energy drinks:

* Usually contain caffeine
* Sometimes have unregulated ingredients, so their safety and quality are unknown.
* Are not designed to rehydrate the body after physical activity - the high sugar content and/or carbonation can interfere with hydration
* May also contribute to tooth decay due to sugar content.

Health Canada cautions children to avoid consuming energy drinks.
Juice
Real 100% juice can be part of a healthy diet, in small amounts. Three to four oranges are used to make one 250 mL glass of orange juice, which makes juice a concentrated source of energy and sugar. If you have too much juice it can lead to a variety of problems:

* Sugar can lead to tooth decay
* Excess sugar can lead to diarrhea and other stomach problems such as gas, bloating, and cramps
* Too many liquid calories can result in a lack of fibre in the diet
* Excess calories can fill children up, making them less hungry for other healthy foods and beverages
* Liquid calories can lead to an intake of too many calories

Provide fruit such as oranges, grapes, berries or bananas instead and/or skip the juice and drink water.

If juice is included in your child's diet, limit juice to 125 mL glass or 200 mL juice box of 100% juice per day. Artificially-sweetened drinks such as diet pop, flavoured water or Crystal Light™ are not recommended for children.