



## **ENERGY DRINKS – PARENT INFORMATION**

**What you need to know** - There is growing concern in the media and press regarding retailers instituting a voluntary ban on the sale of high caffeine energy drinks to children aged 16 years and below. There is now a body of evidence that shows consumption of energy drinks in the UK by children is higher than any other European country.

A European study identified an adult can consume 200mg of caffeine per day with no adverse effects, the safe limit for children can be exceeded by them consuming just one energy drink. Currently soft drinks are required by law to carry a warning where the caffeine content exceeds 150mg, that the drink contains high caffeine and is not recommended for children.

**What is Caffeine?** - Caffeine is a plant product that is most commonly found in coffee beans, tea, soft drinks, cocoa, chocolate and energy drinks. A 50g bar of chocolate may contain 25mg caffeine, a coffee 140mg and an energy drink up to 500mg.

It may be one of the most widely used drug in the world but it is a stimulant drug that is addictive and has side effects, heavy daily use can cause: insomnia, irritability, nervousness, restlessness, stomach upset, diarrhoea, dizziness, nausea, fast heartbeat, palpitations and muscle tremors.

**Too much Sugar?** - Free sugars are those added to food such as sucrose, table sugar, glucose, or those naturally present in things like honey & unsweetened fruit juices. Too much sugar is harmful to your health and children should not exceed the recommended maximum intake of sugar (Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition).

For a child 11 years and over this is 30g or 7 sugar cubes just one energy drink could contain an average of 15 sugar cubes.

**Risks** - Aside from general health side effects excessive consumption can also contribute to unhealthy behaviours which in turn can lead to problems in school with discipline. It may also contribute significantly to anti-social behaviour in the community which has a detrimental effect on everybody's quality of life and could lead to police or local authority intervention.

**What you can do?** - A voluntary retailer Code of Practice exists on energy drinks and they should not be sold or consumed by those Under 16.

Highlight the dangers to your child and encourage them not to drink energy drinks.

**THE BEST DRINK FOR GENERAL WELL BEING IS WATER**