

Healthy Teens

March 2018 Parent Newsletter

Teenagers and Stress

For teens, life can become overwhelming with homework, pressures to get good grades, friendships, relationships, jobs, extracurricular activities and home responsibilities. As a result, teenagers may start feeling stressed without recognizing or knowing how to cope.

Teens may not see how stress can change their behaviour and impact their thinking. As a parent, you can support your teen by helping them recognize the signs of stress. Common signs of unhealthy stress include: irritability, anger, excessive worry, sleeping problems, eating too much or too little and frequent headaches or stomachaches (when they have been seen by a physician and have been told they are healthy).

Noticing changes in your teen and identifying these changes is an important step to opening up conversations about stress [e.g. *You are quick to get angry lately. (Provide a specific example: Last week you fought with your sister a lot and this week you've been on edge with everyone). That is not like you. Has something happened?*]. This shows that you care and are there to support them. Ask your teen how they are feeling and listen to what they are



saying to build trust. Ask them about what may be causing them to feel stressed and together identify healthy ways to address it.

As parents, you can help your teen reduce stress. Encourage them to take time for themselves. Being physically active, listening to music, getting enough sleep, spending time with friends are all examples of ways to reduce stress. Remind them they can make choices and determine how to respond to stress in their lives and that you are there to talk and provide support. Model healthy coping strategies such as problem solving, eating well and getting support when you need it.

Articles

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People who are immunized don't just protect themselves; they also protect those who cannot be immunized. This is sometimes called herd immunity. By immunizing yourselves and your children, you help make the community healthier. For more information visit <http://immunizealberta.ca/should-i-immunize-my-child/all-about-immunity>



Energy Drinks and Youth

Is your teen asking about drinking energy drinks? If so, here are some important things to discuss.

Energy drinks have caffeine in them. Youth who consume too much caffeine may experience:

- Problems sleeping
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Shaky/nervousness
- Anxiety
- Faster heart rate



Health Canada suggests a daily caffeine limit of 2.5mg/kg body weight for youth 13 years and older. For a teen with a weight of 63.5kg (140lbs), this should be a daily limit of 160mg of caffeine. The table below lists the caffeine content of energy drinks compared to other common caffeine containing drinks.

Energy drinks can contain an average of 14 teaspoons

(56 grams) of sugar per 473ml can. They may also have high amounts of herbs, vitamins, minerals and amino acids added to these drinks. Due to the high levels of caffeine and the lack of information on how the other ingredients affect youth, energy drinks are not recommended for children or teens.

Energy drinks should not be confused with sports drinks.

Consuming energy drinks before or during physical activity is not recommended because it can lead to dehydration, vomiting, increased heart rate and muscle cramps. During physical activity, it is best to choose water first.

➤ For more information on healthy drink choices for visit healthyeatingstartshere.ca, click on “Healthy Drinks, Healthy Kids”.

➤ For more information caffeine and energy drinks, visit Health Canada <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/>, and search ‘energy drink’

Caffeine Content of Common Drinks

Drink	Drink Size	Average Caffeine (mg)
Coffee, brewed	8 oz (250ml)	100–150mg
Energy Drink	1 can (473ml)	80–180mg
Iced Coffee	8 oz (250ml)	55–80mg
Tea, brewed	8 oz (250ml)	50
Cola	1 can (355ml)	30