

# Use of Energy Drinks in Scouting Activities

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Energy drinks contain water and stimulants, such as caffeine, ginseng, and guarana, as well as varying amounts of other ingredients including carbohydrates, protein, amino acids, vitamins, sodium, and other minerals. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Committee on Nutrition and the AAP Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness have rigorously reviewed the available scientific data on energy drinks and sports drinks and found that “stimulant-containing energy drinks have no place in the diet of children and adolescents.” [1] Virtually all other relevant professional organizations have echoed this opinion. [2–5]

Energy drinks should be differentiated from sports drinks in that energy drinks always include stimulants in addition to the water, sugars, and minerals generally contained in sports drinks. Again, the consensus expert medical opinion is that, for almost all exercise environments, water intake alone is the best way to remain hydrated. [2–4]

Because of the potential for adverse medical consequences as well as the negative professional recommendations regarding use of energy drinks by children, the following recommendation is made by the BSA Safe Scouting Support Committee:

**Energy drinks are to be discouraged at Scouting events  
and should not be sold at BSA trading posts or other retail venues.**

## References

1. Committee on Nutrition and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness. 2011. “Sports Drinks and Energy Drinks for Children and Adolescents: Are They Appropriate?” *Pediatrics* 127 (6): 1182–1189.
2. Pound, C.M., and B. Blair. 2017. “Energy and Sports Drinks in Children and Adolescents.” *Paediatrics & Child Health* 22 (7): 406–410. On behalf of the Canadian Paediatric Society.
3. Higgins, J.P., K. Babu, P.A. Deuster, and J. Shearer. 2018. “Energy Drinks: A Contemporary Issues Paper.” *Current Sports Medicine Reports* 17 (2): 65–72. On behalf of the American College of Sports Medicine.
4. McDermott, B.P., S.A. Anderson, L.E. Armstrong, D.J. Casa, S.N. Cheuvront, L. Cooper, W.L. Kenney, F.G. O’Connor, and W.O. Roberts. 2017. “National Athletic Trainers’ Association Position Statement: Fluid Replacement for the Physically Active.” *Journal of Athletic Training* 52 (9): 877–895. On behalf of the National Athletic Trainers’ Association.
5. Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. April 2018. “Position Statement and Recommendations for the Use of Energy Drinks by Young Athletes.” <https://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/nfhs-sports-medicine-position-statements-and-guidelines/>. On behalf of the National Federation of State High School Associations.