



# Focus on Oral Health

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**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

## Sport Drinks

Exercising brings on the need for rehydration of the body. Water used to be the most common drink, but now sport drinks, fitness waters and flavored waters line the shelves in supermarkets and convenience stores. Advertisements indicate we should drink a bottle or can of energy drink every time we work hard enough to break a sweat. Do we really need these drinks, or are they adding calories and sugar to our diets?

According to Dr. David Katz, physician and nutrition expert at Yale University School of Medicine, any boost from these drinks is solely from the sugar and caffeine. Dr. Katz says, "It's a way of peddling soda to the health-conscious crowd."

None of the sport drinks provide fiber or protein, but they have between 80 and 150 calories, while their "diet" counterparts have around 10 calories per 8-ounce serving. The average sport drink contains around 28 grams of sugar, while an 8-ounce serving of Pepsi has 21 grams of sugar. A typical serving size is 8 ounces; however the energy and sport drink container is usually the same size as a soda (16 ounces). Because individuals usually drink the whole can or bottle as one serving they are typically consuming 160 to 300 calories after the workout, possibly defeating the purpose of the exercise.



*Sport drinks and fitness waters are no safer than sodas when it comes to tooth erosion.*

Most energy drinks appear to be part soft drink and part nutritional supplement. The harmful effects of acid and sugar on tooth enamel have been well documented concerning soda pop and other carbonated beverages. Research is showing that the enamel damage caused by non-cola and sports beverages are three to 11 times greater than cola-based drinks, with energy drinks and bottled lemonades causing the most harm to dental enamel. Most colas contain one or more acids, but sports drinks contain additives and organic acids which can advance dental erosion because of their ability to break down calcium. Dental erosion can result in sensitive, yellowing or pitted teeth that are losing their protective enamel.

Sports drinks and fitness waters are no safer than sodas when it comes to tooth erosion. Water is sufficient for rehydration, as most individuals do not need the added empty calories in their daily intake. It would be better to choose water to preserve tooth enamel and ultimately protect the teeth from decay.

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## Healthy at School: Local Wellness Policies

Did you know that your local school district has a wellness policy? It is hoped that you do! The U.S. Congress has required that each school district received federal dollars for school lunch or breakfast have such a policy completed by the start of the 2006-07 school year.

### What is in a local wellness policy?

Each school district writes its own policy. Each wellness policy needs to address nutrition guidelines for all foods served in schools, including those sold in vending machines, after school and to raise funds; nutrition education; physical activity; and other activities to promote student wellness. The law also requires that districts include a variety of people in planning and carrying out the policies, including students, parents and community members. A district is to assign a person to be responsible for making sure the policy is carried out.

### How are we doing?

A 2007 survey completed by nearly two-thirds of North Dakota school meal providers showed that:

- Ninety-five percent of the schools had a policy in place.
- More than half removed vending machines, changed what is offered in beverage or food vending machines, or limited the time that students can access the machines.
- More than half made changes to how food is prepared to improve the nutrient content of the meals offered.
- Nearly half of schools hold recess before lunch, which has been shown to help students eat more of their lunches, including the fruits, vegetables and milk offered.

A survey was administered by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI). DPI is charged with making sure that every school has a policy in place. A national survey showed there has been a nearly 60 percent reduction in beverage calories shipped to schools across the U.S. since 2004.

### How can we do better?

A 2008 national study showed that competitive foods (foods that are less healthy) are available in a majority of elementary schools across the U.S. And although the amount of liquid calories served to students has decreased, many schools switched from selling soda to selling sport drinks, which are believed to be healthier options but still contain empty calories and can cause dental decay and/or dental erosion.

In North Dakota, 69 percent of middle schools and high schools still sell soda pop or drinks that are not 100 percent juice, while only 15 percent of the schools offered fruits or vegetables for sale from school stores, canteens or snack bars (2006 School Health Profiles).

### What can you do?

If you are interested in making sure that your school district's wellness policy is carried out or improved:

- Ask to see a copy of the policy.
- Ask who is in charge of making sure that the policy is carried out.
- Express your interest in serving on a school health and/or wellness council.
- Ask how and when the school is assessing the policy; it's suggested that schools do this at least once every three years.
- State your support for fund-raising activities that do not include selling candy, cookies, or other unhealthy foods. For a list of healthy fund-raising ideas, see [www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/rep/s/fundraising](http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/child/rep/s/fundraising).

More information about creating healthy experiences in schools is available from the North Dakota Healthy Weight Council Toolkit. Check it out and share with the school, your neighbors and friends:

[www.healthynd.org/HealthyWeightCouncilToolkits](http://www.healthynd.org/HealthyWeightCouncilToolkits).

Together, we can build a Healthy North Dakota one school and one community at a time!



## North Dakota Oral Health Coalition Chooses Policy Priorities

Improving access to oral health care in the state is a continuing goal of the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition. Over the past several months, Coalition committees discussed policy changes that could improve access to oral health care. The Coalition has outlined three policy priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session. The Coalition will draft bills and work with partners to advocate for passage of bills relating to a new loan repayment component to encourage dentists to practice in public health clinics; establish a mobile dental care service to provide low-income and underserved children dental treatment, prevention and education in the dental address challenged areas of the state; and one-time funding for the dental safety net clinics in the state. Anyone interested in serving on the Coalition Policy Committee or assisting with these efforts can contact Janel Johnson, Oral Health Coalition Chairperson, at 701.323.8745, or [jkjohnson@mohs.org](mailto:jkjohnson@mohs.org).

If you are interested in more information about the Oral Health Coalition or would like to assist on a committee, visit [www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/Coalition.htm](http://www.ndhealth.gov/oralhealth/Coalition.htm) or contact Kimberlie Yineman at 800.472.2286.

## Oral Health Plays a Role in Head Start Programs

Head Start is a national program that provides comprehensive child development services to disadvantaged children ages three and four in an effort to break the cycle of poverty. Head Start promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, social and other services to enrolled children and families.

One objective of Head Start is to ensure that - through collaboration among families, staff and health professionals - all child health and development concerns are identified, and children and families are linked to ongoing sources of continuous, accessible care to meet their basic health needs. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) Head Start Dental Home Initiative is a project to help ensure this objective is accomplished. A Head Start Dental Home Initiative Leadership Team has been established to implement the project in North Dakota. The team is comprised of Dr. Brent Holman, AAPD state coordinator; Kimberlie Yineman, Oral Health Program director; Linda Rorman, Head Start State Collaboration Office administrator; and JoAnn Brager, vice-president, North Dakota Head Start Association. Collaboration between Head Start programs and community providers of pediatric health care strengthens the systems of care and enriches the lives of children, families, and communities.

Dentists can help support the Head Start programs in their communities in a number of ways. Participating in the Dental Home Initiative will help ensure that the disadvantaged children in your community will have a source of continuous, accessible oral health care. Another opportunity for advocacy for local Head Start programs is to volunteer to serve on the Health Services Advisory Committee in your community. This committee plays an important role in helping to ensure that Head Start children have medical and dental homes that will remain in place after the children leave the program.



# Join the North Dakota Oral Health Coalition

The North Dakota Oral Health Coalition (NDOHC) represents a wide range of public, private and nonprofit organizations and individuals interested in developing and promoting innovative strategies to achieve optimal oral health for all North Dakotans.

If you are interested in joining the coalition, complete and mail the application below or enroll over the phone by calling 701.328.2356 or 800.472.2286, press 1 (toll-free in North Dakota).

## North Dakota Oral Health Coalition Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: North Dakota Oral Health Coalition, North Dakota Department of Health, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301, Bismarck, ND 58505-0200.

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