

Turn the Lights Out on Energy Drinks

Research warns against use by children, teens

Energy drinks are big business, with more than a thousand distributors globally and annual sales expected to top the \$9 billion mark this year. Who's buying them? *Everyone*. And with average caffeine content equal to or exceeding a cup of coffee, the question can certainly be raised, should our children be consuming them?

Definitely not, according to a recent review of data published in *Pediatrics*. Although surveys show that 30-50 percent of teens and young adults drink energy beverages, the study, which analyzed scientific studies, government and media reports, and other data on energy drinks, concludes that the drinks "have no therapeutic benefit, and many ingredients are understudied and not regulated." The study authors "discourage routine use" by children and teens.

So, does your child consume energy drinks, and if so, how many on a daily basis? And what about soft drinks and other sugar-sweetened beverages? Maybe it's time to find out. ■

