

## **Do children need sports drinks?**

Sports drinks are a booming business these days. They may be popular, but are unnecessary for children unless they are completing at least 90 minute workouts. Sports drinks were designed for professional athletes to help prevent dehydration through sweating from vigorous exercise.

Sports drinks are:

- High in sugar, sodium and potassium.
- Available in huge portion sizes (20-32 oz), providing excessive calories.
- Marketed to kids in cool colours, in juice like containers, have great names like *Riptide Rush*, *Glacier Freeze* and are labelled with buzzwords like “thirst quenching”, and “hydration”.

To prevent dehydration, especially during hot weather and when being active, encourage children to drink before the activity and every 15 to 30 minutes during the activity. Children tend to drink more fluids if they are flavoured. Dilute fruit juice with an equal amount of water when kids are active, or add frozen cubes of fruit juice to water. Adding a strawberry or a slice of lemon or lime to water can work magic.

**For health related information call York Region Community and Health Services  
*Health Connection* at 1-800-361-5653 or visit [www.region.york.on.ca](http://www.region.york.on.ca).**