

December 22, 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Energy Drinks have become the new way for middle school students to achieve an immediate energy boost. As a result of this consumption, the school nurse is seeing more and more young adolescents reporting to the office with physical complaints and even presenting to the emergency room due to adverse health effects. Teachers are also observing students struggling to stay on task and noticing more disruptive behaviors when they are experiencing the effects of energy drinks. Students themselves have even reported feeling jittery, dizzy, and not being able to focus.

United States scientists have found that these energy drinks contain enough stimulating ingredients to cause anxiety, insomnia, dehydration, gastrointestinal upset, nervousness, flushed face, and an accelerated heart rate. The consumption of energy drinks has been linked to arrhythmias, headaches, seizures, psychiatric events, strokes, withdrawal symptoms, tooth erosion, and even death.

The main component of these beverages is sugar and caffeine. Caffeine is a powerful stimulant of the cardiovascular system, central nervous system, respiratory system and the skeletal muscles. Hundred of brands are now marketed with caffeine content ranging from 50 to over 500mg per can/bottle. Please be aware that energy drinks are not regulated by the FDA at present because they are marked as dietary supplements rather than beverages. Other active ingredients found in these drinks include guarana, ginseng, sucrose, glucose, taurine, vitamins, flavorings, other herbal supplements, and coloring. These ingredients provide a short-term energy boost and do not constitute suitable sources of rehydration or the restoration of electrolytes. Some of the ingredients such as taurine, guarana, and ginseng may increase blood pressure and raise the heart rhythm.

The South Allegheny Middle School is taking an active approach to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of our students so **please be advised that the South Allegheny Middle School will be banning the consumption and or possession of all Energy Drinks beginning Monday, January 3, 2011.** Please review this letter with your child as disciplinary action will be taken if a violation occurs. Thank you for your cooperation in relation to this matter.

Sincerely,
Middle School Administration