DO ACTIVE KIDS NEED SPORTS DRINKS?

Summer is just around the corner and warmer weather usually means more outdoor activities for your kids. A common question as temperature rises is whether or not sports drinks are necessary for children. Sports drinks typically contain electrolytes, fluids and around 30g of carbohydrates in 500mls, and are marketed to improve athletic performance. Although there have been studies on adult athletes and the benefits of sports drinks, research on the benefits for children/adolescents is limited. Below we will summarize the pro’s and con’s from current evidence-based articles.

**Pro’s of Sports Drinks:**
- Good for replenishing electrolytes that are lost when we sweat
- Helps children stay hydrated, especially if they don’t like drinking water
- Liquid sugars are rapidly digested and absorbed so they provide a quick source of energy

**Con’s of Sports Drinks:**
- High sugar content
- Frequent sugar-sweetened beverage consumption linked to dental caries and overweight/obesity
- Not necessary unless performing intense physical activity or activity in high heat

Overall, the Canadian Pediatric Society recommends the **average child consume water rather than sports drinks** before, after, and during routine, or play-based physical activity (2017). If your child is involved in intense, prolonged physical activities or is exercising in the heat then water with a sport drink could be considered.

MAKE YOUR OWN SPORTS DRINK!

You can make your own sports drink by combining:

- 250mL of fruit juice
- A pinch of salt
- 750mL water

This saves money, has less added sugar and other additives compared to store bought sports drinks!