



## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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#### **Are Sports Drinks as Harmful to Kids' Teeth as Soda?**

*Delta Dental Suggests Parents Have Kids Drink Water to Quench Thirst*

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (July 11, 2013)** – With summer sports in full swing, kids will be very tempted to gulp down large sugary sports drinks to stay hydrated. Consuming too many of these beverages, however, can harm a child's teeth. Delta Dental of Illinois advises parents to monitor and limit the number of these beverages that children consume to help prevent cavities.

"Young athletes need to replace fluids, carbohydrates, protein and electrolytes after strenuous exercise," said Dr. Katina Spadoni, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. "The high sugar count and highly acidic content of sports drinks can increase a child's susceptibility to tooth decay and enamel erosion if too much is consumed."

Like soda, energy and sports drinks contain high levels of acidity and high concentrations of sugar. A study from the Harvard School of Public Health found that 12 ounces of a leading brand of cola and a leading brand of energy drink each contained 42 grams of sugar, while a leading brand of sports drink contained 21 grams of sugar.<sup>1</sup> According to a University of Iowa study, a leading sports drink had the greatest erosion potential on both enamel and roots of teeth when compared to leading energy drinks, soda and apple juice.<sup>2</sup>

Sugar itself does not rot teeth, but rather, the acid that is produced when sugar mixes with certain bacteria in the mouth. Decay forms around the parts of the tooth where the plaque accumulates. The high acid from the drinks themselves can also have an erosive effect on the whole surface of the tooth. Sugary, acidic drinks are particularly damaging when they are sipped frequently throughout the day because they spend a prolonged amount of time washed over the teeth.

A great way to monitor a child's intake of sugary drinks is to limit consumption to a single 12 to 16 ounce bottle instead of buying a 32 or 64 ounce bottle. Encourage kids to consume as much water as they do sports drink. Drinking water keeps them hydrated and helps wash any lingering sports drink from teeth.

If your kids find water boring, consider adding slices of orange, lemon or cucumber to make it more appealing.

“As with all foods and beverages that contain significant amounts of sugar,” Dr. Spadoni said, “moderation is the key to maintaining good oral health.”

For additional information to improve oral health, visit [mouthmattersil.com](http://mouthmattersil.com).

#### **About Delta Dental of Illinois**

*Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. DDIL covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members in these groups nationwide. DDIL is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard School of Public Health. How Sweet Is It? Accessed June 2012. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/how-sweet-is-it/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> University of Iowa College of Dentistry. Acidic Beverages Increase the Risk of In Vitro Tooth Erosion. Accessed June 2012. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2516950/>