HEALTH

Do 'supplements' really supplement our lives?

Energy drinks and protein supplements have become increasingly popular amongst youngsters nowadays. Players gulping down cans of energy drinks or sports drinks while playing football or cricket is a common sight. Many boys now want to build a physique like Arnold Schwarzenegger and for them consuming protein shakes have become the order of the day.

Most of these are readily available and do not require prescriptions to be purchased. It makes one wonder about the suitability of these 'supplements' and who should ideally be consuming them.

ENERGY DRINKS

Energy drinks basically contain concentrated carbohydrates; they may or may not contain electrolytes. Caffeine is another key ingredient found in varying amounts in different energy drinks.

Carbohydrates and caffeine combined is the reason for the boost of energy we get when we consume energy drinks. Depending upon the caffeine content in the drink, our energy levels can hit the roof. These drinks are ideally suited for those individuals who indulge in high level physical activities of approximately 90 minutes or more.

The activity could either be an intense workout or playing a game on the field. They help push a person to play or workout beyond their limit and for a longer period of time. Energy drinks are extremely convenient to just buy and drink, thus replenishing our depleted energy level.

However, they are not without negative effects, warns Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin, chief nutritionist at United Hospital. She says, "If taken in excess, energy drinks can lead to hormone imbalance. It is also known to increase the level of cortisol in the body and disturb a person's sleep pattern. It should not be consumed by people who suffer from obesity and diabetes and also those who have any gastro-intestinal tract disorders."

For children, she says, "Adrenalin in a child could increase if s/he consumes too much of any energy drink. This could make the child hyper active."

SPORTS DRINKS

Even though sports drinks and energy drinks are very similar, sports drinks are formulated specifically to be used during workouts in order to enhance performance. The important difference between sports and energy drinks is that sports drinks contain moderate levels of carbohydrates and contain a good amount of electrolyte and minerals. These electrolytes help replace the electrolytes the body loses through sweat during a workout.

Sports drinks are almost parallel to normal saline and do not have as many harmful effects. They should ideally be consumed by anyone indulging in physical activity of 30 to 40 minutes.

Most sports drinks do not contain any caffeine and are easier on the gastro-intestinal tract. If consumed in moderation, sports drinks are safe for even children to consume.

PROTEIN POWDER

Protein powders which were once used only by athletes and bodybuilders for championships have now become very mainstream. These help in building body mass, making them very popular amongst body builders. Like the name suggests, protein powders are rich in protein and contain very little carbohydrates. As liquids are digested faster than solids by the body, this liquid protein gets absorbed really quickly and that is good for rebuilding muscles after a workout. It is also very helpful for people who want to gain weight as it is a good source of added calories.

According to nutritionist Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin, protein powders should be consumed in proportion to the workout a person does. If the amount of protein powder consumed is more than the level of workout done, then the excess protein is absorbed by the blood and is harmful for the kidneys.

For that matter, if too much protein is consumed for a long period of time it can increase the risk of developing kidney stones and worsen existing kidney problems.

She says, "Protein powder can be prescribed to a child who is underweight or whose muscles are not developing well, and also to a pregnant mother if her child is not developing properly in her womb."

When asked how essential these supplements are for people to consume she opines, "It is always better to get the required amounts of proteins, carbohydrates and vitamin from our regular diet than from these supplements. Also, energy drinks and protein powders are best taken under a doctor's advice."

Overconsumption of any of these supplements poses a health risk. The best way forward would be to consume them wisely after weighing the pros and cons and under expert guidance so they can be beneficial.

By Samina Hossain

CHECK IT OUT

The best dates in the world now in Bangladesh

Al-Ansar Factory for Dates & Sweets is a registered trademark and one of the leading companies in Saudi Arabia, with experts in manufacturing and exporting Saudi Arabian dates, boasting production of more than 50 kinds of pearl-dates and sweets. The company is located in the premises of the Holy Haram, Medina. The most popular and original dates like Ajwah, Mabrum (Maryam), Rashidiyah, etc. are now in Bangladesh, available in Unimart at Gulshan-2 and many other retail outlets near you. And their attractive packaging makes them suitable as corporate gifts.

These dates are ideal for your family or corporate iftars in the upcoming Ramadan. Call 01966724625 for details.

Mother's Day plans at Le Méridien Dhaka

To mark the symbol of love, respect and appreciation for your mother, Le Méridien Dhaka has designed a range of creative engagements for guests to participate in to make Mother's Day (14 May) more memorable.

The hotel's all-day dining restaurant Latest Recipe has arranged a special baker's corner for guests bringing in their mothers to design special cakes to their own liking as takeaway gifts. Mothers would have the chance to participate in cake baking competition and also have the chance of winning prizes.

Guests can also avail buffet dinner at Latest Recipe (Tk 3,600++ BDT per person for the day). And children would have the chance to enjoy baking lessons from pastry chef Shahid. Guests can enjoy all these offers from 6.30pm to 11.30pm on 14 May, 2017.

The lobby lounge, Latitude 23, will also be selling chocolate gift boxes of six from 7 May to 14 May, 2017.

For reservations, dial +8801990900900.