



SUGAR BY ANY OTHER NAME IS JUST AS SWEET

As some school districts ban the sale of soda, some companies are making sodas "healthier" by adding calcium and vitamins and marketing fortified yet still sugary sports drinks to replace the banned beverages.

In a related development, the consumption of energy drinks has increased dramatically among middle and high schoolers. These beverages can boost heart rate and blood pressure and cause dehydration and restlessness. Because of their high levels of caffeine, they can also interfere with normal sleep patterns.

SINGING THE PRAISES OF AMERICAN IDOL

Due to the popularity of Simon, Paula, Randy and aspiring pop stars everywhere, interest in singing and music classes is increasing nationwide. At Nathan Hale Middle School in Cleveland, OH, for example, more students want to be in the school choir than the program can accommodate.

"I actually think it has affected music in a positive way. It shows kids that ordinary people can do amazing things," suggests Nancy Stover, a band and chorus teacher at Madison Middle School in Marshall, NC.

DO YOU REALLY WANT YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR TO KNOW THAT?

Much has been made recently of the dangers of "virtual predators" on sites like myspace.com and facebook.com, but kids of all ages fail to grasp the enormity of information they post online. Teens think of these as playful sites for their peers' eyes only when it is actually just a few mouse clicks from public consumption. For example, college admissions officers now report going to these sites for more information about applicants. And college athletes risk losing their scholarships because of posting photos involving alcohol and including references to sex and drugs - all of which violate student codes of conduct.

Kids post cell phone numbers, class schedules and even sexual orientation on their personal web pages that can literally be accessed with a few mouse clicks by anyone anywhere in the world. Twenty middle school students in Costa Mesa, CA, were suspended for viewing a myspace.com posting that included an expletive, an anti-Semitic reference and contained implied physical violence directed at a classmate.

FEATURED PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Special:
Secret Life Of Kids.



Find out what's really going on! **25% off!**

The *Secret Life of Kids* is a series of award-winning programs giving you an inside look at the pressures children face.

The Secret Life of Kids, Part One offers a behind-the-scenes look into real, pressure-packed issues in children's lives today. In this unique three-program set, kids tell – in their own words – what they might not tell their parents or teachers. In order to help you talk with your kids, the programs contain special features such as tips for parents, research, and conversation starters. For more information, [click here](#).

HOW TO KEEP TEENAGE GIRLS ACTIVE

A recent study published in *Medicine Science in Sports* revealed that low levels of physical activity in 2,000 teenage girls (ages 16-19) was linked to lack of "interest" and "motivation." The girls themselves cited being too busy or too tired to participate. When researchers examined the number of hours spent at work or doing household chores and the amount of sleep per night, however, they found no differences between these girls and those who were more active.

Researchers suggest the significance of these findings is that lack of time and fatigue are perceived, but not actual barriers to physical activity. The challenge, therefore, is to find ways to overcome these perceptions in adolescent girls, who often become more inactive once they reach their teenage years.

One possible solution may be several 10- to 15-minute periods of exercise throughout the day. Health and fitness experts agree that these shorter bouts offer a cumulative effect that provides the same benefits as the recommended 30-minutes of daily activity.

[Top](#)