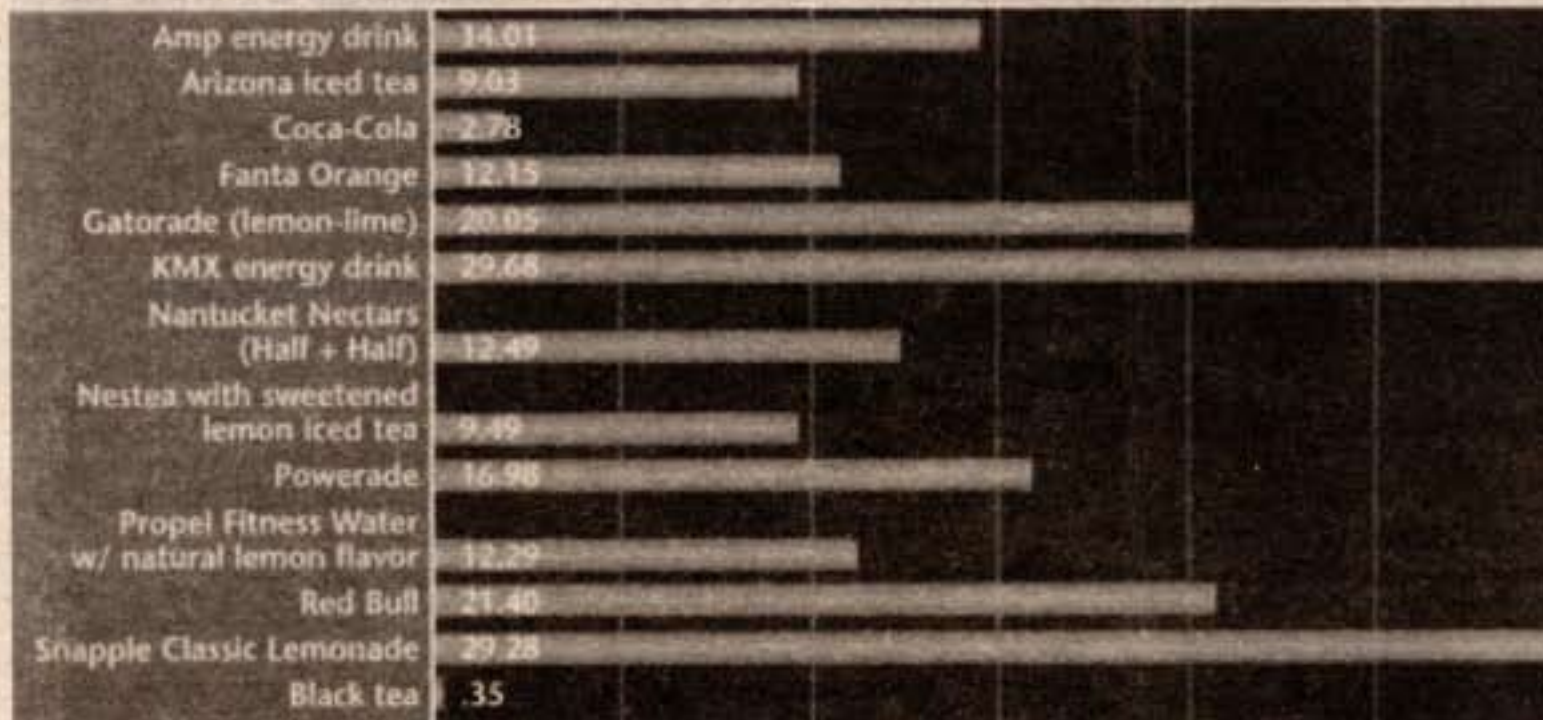




Health

Study shows energy, sports drinks attack teeth enamel

Which is the most harmful? (By measuring the mg of enamel destroyed)



by Rick Borquez DDS

Sports beverages and energy drinks appeal to people who strive to maintain a healthy lifestyle. However, the same drinks that claim to recharge the body after a workout could cause more irreversible damage to the teeth than soft drinks.

A study of the affects some of these beverages had on enamel appeared in the January/February issue of *General Dentistry*, the Academy of General Dentistry's clinical, peer-review journal.

The study found that over time, exposing dental enamel to bottled lemonades, energy drinks and sports drinks can do more harm to tooth enamel than soft drinks.

This study revealed that enamel damage caused by non-cola and sports beverages was three to 11 times greater than cola-based drinks, with energy drinks and bottled lemonades causing the most harm to dental enamel.

A previous study demonstrated that non-cola and canned iced teas can more aggressively harm dental enamel than cola.

Most soft drinks contain one or more food additives. These acids

cause the tooth enamel to breakdown. Phosphoric and citric acid are the most common, but malic and tartaric acids are sometimes present.

Drinking the beverages does not automatically mean a mouth full of cavities. There are ways to minimize the harmful effects. The major problem with any of these drinks is not chugging it down, but continuous sipping over a long period. Sitting and sipping on these drinks throughout the day can do terrible things to your teeth.

The research continuously exposed enamel from cavity-free molars and premolars to a variety of popular sports beverages, including energy drinks, fitness water and sports drinks, as well as non-cola beverages such as lemonade and ice tea for a period of 14 days (336 hours). The exposure time was comparable to about 13 years of normal beverage consumption.

The study findings revealed significant enamel damage associated with all beverages tested. Results, listed from greatest to least damage to dental enamel, included lemonade, energy drinks, sports

drinks, fitness water, ice tea and cola.

Most cola-based drinks may

contain one or more acids, commonly phosphoric and citric acids; however, sports beverages contain other additives and organic acids that can advance dental erosion. These organic acids are potentially very erosive to dental enamel because of their ability to breakdown calcium needed to strengthen teeth and prevent gum disease.

To maintain healthier teeth, it's best to drink a soft drink all at once rather than sipping for a long period of time.

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