

Prohibiting the sale of energy drinks in public buildings: a resolution that makes sense!

Life habits are influenced by many factors on which various agents can have a bearing in order to foster health and well-being. In this regard, municipalities play a strategic role in the prevention of obesity and many diseases, as their interventions have an immediate impact on the environment and on citizens' lifestyles. Be it to improve the food supply and access to healthy foods, to encourage active transportation and enhance the supply of public transportation, or to increase access to sports facilities, the possibilities for action are numerous and varied for municipalities that wish to make a difference.

In order to make it easier for municipalities to implement policy prohibiting the sale of energy drinks in their buildings, a model resolution has been made available to them (see page 3). Municipalities can use it as is or adapt it to suit their specific needs.

Cities are taking action to reduce access to energy drinks

In the course of an ordinary session on October 17, 2011, the members of the municipal council of the town of Amqui passed a resolution to proscribe the sale of energy drinks in all buildings under its jurisdiction. This ban was the fruit of representations carried out by the Comité d'Action Matapédia en Forme [Matapédia in shape action committee].

In response to pressure exerted by energy-drink manufacturers, the mayor of Amqui launched an appeal to his elected colleagues to urge them to adopt, like his town, a resolution prohibiting the sale of energy drinks in their municipal buildings. To date, numerous other municipalities have followed suit:

- Amqui: October 17, 2011
- Causapscal: December 5, 2011
- Rimouski: December 19, 2011
- Havre-Saint-Pierre: January 9, 2012
- Salaberry-de-Valleyfield: January 24, 2012
- Roberval: February 6, 2012
- Mont-Saint-Hilaire: February 6, 2012
- Saguenay: March 14, 2012
- Etc.*

* For the complete list of cities that have passed such a resolution, please visit www.cqpp.qc.ca/fr/dossiers/alimentation-dans-les-villes/initiatives-des-villes.

Energy drinks, obesity, and health risks

Though there are numerous other factors at play in the development of obesity, well-known organizations such as the *Institute of Medicine*, the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, the *United States Department of Agriculture*, and the *Rudd Center* are taking action to diminish the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. It has been demonstrated, among other things, that the consumption of one such beverage per day is associated with a 60% higher risk for obesity among children. Moreover, sugar-sweetened beverages are associated with various illnesses, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, tooth and bone conditions, as well as certain types of cancer.

Because they are first and foremost highly sweetened beverages, energy drinks must only be consumed sparingly. Furthermore, they contain high concentrations of stimulating substances, such as caffeine. As such, they constitute a potential health risk, which is why the *American Academy of Pediatrics* recommends that children and adolescents not consume energy drinks. For its part, the Government of Canada announced in October 2011 that it would require cans to carry a warning indicating that the product is not recommended for children. Nevertheless, many young people still consume these drinks as they are easily available to them.

Finally, it is inadvisable, if not dangerous, to consume energy drinks when practising a sport. Consequently, a ban on selling such drinks on sports and recreation premises under municipal jurisdiction, including ice rinks, soccer and baseball fields, curling arenas and so on, should be strongly encouraged both for the sake of rationality and in order to protect the more vulnerable members of the community.

A CALL TO ACTION!

In light of the above, the Quebec Coalition on Weight-Related Problems (Weight Coalition), the Quebec network of healthy cities and towns (Réseau québécois de Villes et Villages en Santé or RQVVS) and the Quebec Public Health Association (Association pour la santé publique du Québec or ASPQ) support and commend the initiatives taken by municipalities that have banned the sale of energy drinks in their buildings and encourage all of Quebec's municipalities to follow in the tracks of these trail-blazers.

Model Resolution

RESOLUTION # _____

ENERGY DRINKS AND MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

WHEREAS health habits are heavily influenced by the supply of food in different settings and municipalities have a predominant role to play in the development of healthy food environments;

WHEREAS the rate of obesity is of serious concern and this condition affects the health, quality of life, and well-being of the population, in addition to generating significant social costs;

WHEREAS the Government of Quebec alone cannot stop the obesity epidemic and must count on the contribution of municipalities;

WHEREAS the municipality wishes to take an active role in promoting health and well-being by helping citizens adopt a healthy lifestyle;

WHEREAS numerous municipal buildings, including sports and recreation facilities, are heavily frequented by children and adolescents;

WHEREAS the consumption of energy drinks can carry health risks for some groups in the population, including children and adolescents;

WHEREAS, like many public health organizations, the municipality is concerned with the growing consumption of energy drinks by young people;

WHEREAS the consumption of energy drinks when practising a sport can carry health risks and, consequently, the sale of such beverages is irrational in places for physical activity;

It is moved by _____, seconded by _____, and
(*unanimously resolved OR resolved by majority vote*) that:

The sale of energy drinks not be authorized in the municipal buildings of the municipality of (name of municipality).