

TRENDS

- For kids who try their first drink at age 13 or younger, almost 50% of them will become alcoholics as adults. (Hingston et al., 2006)
- Nearly 4 out of 10 students have consumed alcohol by the end of 8th grade.
- Children who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to become an alcoholic as an adult than those who begin at 21.
- 65% of teens who drink obtain their alcohol from family and friends.
- 96% of adults and parents do NOT believe it is acceptable for parents to provide alcohol to underage youth (Century Council Survey)
- 90% of teens don't think drinking is worth the consequences (TCC, Opinion Research Corp, Caravan, Feb 2008)

MISCONCEPTIONS

- *Hosting an alcoholic party at my home for my teen provides a safe, controlled environment.* Hosting an alcoholic party for your underage youth is illegal and sends a message that it's OK to drink at home—so it's OK to drink anywhere. These parties reinforce underage drinking. (MADD)
- *Alcohol is harmless and it is just a part of growing up—it is safer than illegal drugs.* Alcohol is a drug. It affects every organ in the body.

GO FURTHER

Choices and Consequences by Dick Schaeffer
www.therecoveryplace.net
Adolescents in Crisis by G. Wade Rowatt
www.hazelden.org
www.teen-safe.org

More teens are killed by alcohol than all other drugs combined.

More than 3 million US teens are already “problem drinkers.” We firmly believe that any drinking by a teen is a problem, so that number should be much larger. Let's put an end to this epidemic.

Tips and Advice to Consider

The legal drinking age of 21 is not something trivial; teens are not physically equipped to consume alcohol. Their brains have simply not developed enough to handle the high from drinking, nor the temptation to avoid it.

Statistics tell us that teens are getting most of their alcohol from “friends and family.” That means we, as parents, have an important role in preventing the number one killer of teens. Providing underage drinkers with alcohol is unsafe, illegal and irresponsible. And turning a blind eye is as irresponsible as putting a drink in their hands. Make your stance about underage drinking known to your teen, their friends, and their friends' parents.

Addiction is hereditary, and more likely to occur with teens, because the rational area of their brain hasn't fully developed. Teens are also more prone to be sensation seekers, quickly forming habits. Talk to your teen about any family history of alcoholism and addiction. Explain how they are more likely to fall into the trap because of their genetic predisposition. Openly talk about how alcoholism has ruined the lives of people you know.

Talk to your teen about how to say no. (“I don't feel like it...do you have any soda?”, “Alcohol is not my thing”, “I can't because my parents are waiting up for me.”)

Get help

Treatment centers such as the Adolescent Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) at Children's Hospital Boston provide family-oriented and developmentally appropriate approaches to treatment for your family and your teen.
www.ceasar-boston.org/asap

Warning to Parents

Friends and family have put a drunk person to bed to “sleep it off,” only to find them dead in the morning. Alcohol poisoning is a deadly situation—know the warning signs & risks. (Consuming 5 or more drinks in one sitting is called binge drinking & can cause alcohol poisoning!)

Warning signs of alcohol poisoning include:

Slow, shallow/irregular breathing
Confusion
No withdrawal from painful stimuli

Unconsciousness
Blue-tinged skin or pale skin
Absent reflexes

