
KNOW THE FACTS:

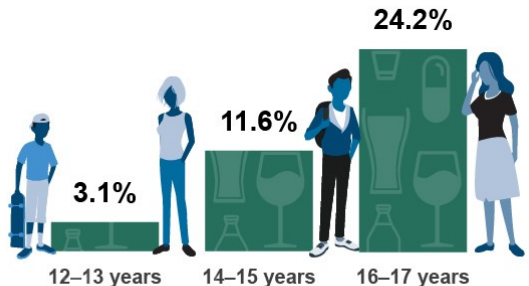
UNDERAGE DRINKING

Underage drinking can interfere with brain development and function. Alcohol slows the pace of communication in the brain, affects coordination, balance, memory, and emotional response. The ability to problem solve, remember, and learn is also impaired. Long term alcohol consumption shrinks the size of brain cells and subsequently the brain cavity.

Underage drinking can cause social problems like fighting back or lack of participation in activities. Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four-times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life, as compared to those who begin drinking at or after 21 years.

Adolescent Alcohol or Illicit Drug Use in Past 30 Days by Age, 2016

Rates of alcohol or illicit drug use among adolescents aged 12–17 years increase with age. The rate for adolescents aged 16–17 years was **more than 7.5 times** the rate for adolescents aged 12–13 years.



Data source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), SAMHSA.

Alcohol use can have negative health consequences. Short-term health effects include: injury from car crashes, falls, drownings, and burns, violence, alcohol poisoning, and disruption of normal growth and development. Long term health risks include chronic diseases of the heart, liver, or digestive system, cancers, memory problems, depression, anxiety, suicide ideations, or alcohol dependence.

Research shows that families are the number one reason young people decide to drink or not. Start short, frequent conversations about alcohol with your children as early as nine years old.

SAMHSA's Talking to Kids About Alcohol: 5 Conversation Goals

1. “Show you disapprove of underage drinking. Over 80% of young people ages 10-18 say their parents are the influence on their decision to drink or not drink. They really are listening and it is important to send a clear and strong message.
2. Show you care about your child’s happiness and well-being. Young people are more likely to listen when they know you’re on their side. Try to reinforce why you don’t want your child to drink— not just because you say so, but because you want your child to be happy and safe. The conversation will go a lot better if you’re working with, and not against, your child.
3. Show you’re a good source of information about alcohol. You want your child to be making informed decisions about drinking, with reliable information about its dangers. You don’t want your child to be learning about alcohol from friends, the internet, or the media— you want to establish yourself as a trustworthy source of information.
4. Show you’re paying attention and you'll notice if your child drinks. You want to show you’re keeping an eye on your child, because young people are more likely to drink if they think no one will notice. There are subtle ways to do this without prying.
5. Build your child’s skills and strategies for avoiding underage drinking. Even if your child doesn’t want to drink, peer pressure is a powerful thing. It could be tempting to drink just to avoid looking uncool. To prepare your child to resist peer pressure, you’ll need to build skills and practice them.”

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). Fact sheets: alcohol and your health. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). Fact sheets: underage drinking. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm>

3. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2015). Beyond Hangovers: understanding alcohol's impact on your health.

4. SAMHSA. (2017). 5 Conversation Goals. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources/five-conversation-goals>