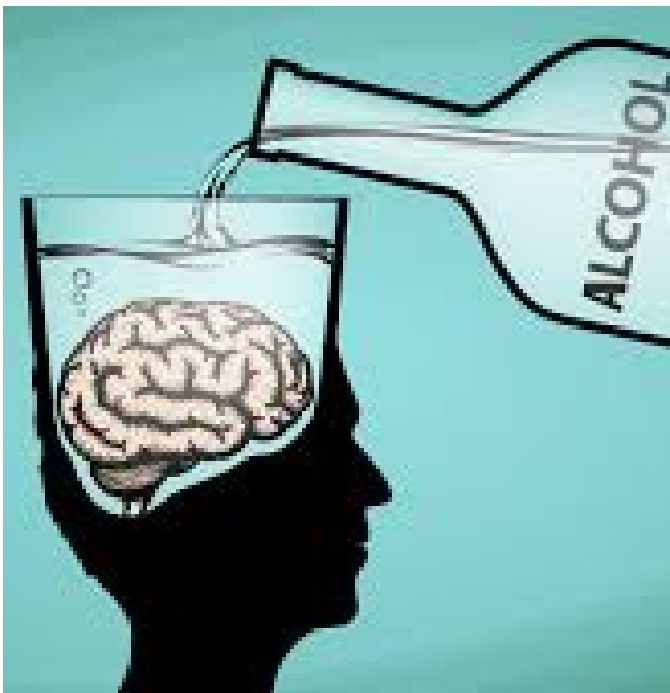


STUDENT SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

ALCOHOL AND TEENAGERS

By: Better Health Channel



Why can't kids drink alcohol?

We asked what moms and dads say to their kids about underage drinking.

It turns out dads are significantly less likely than moms to tell their kids the facts such as:

- Alcohol is unhealthy for a developing brain.
- Alcohol can interfere with judgement
- The dangers of drunk driving

Seize the opportunity this summer to have a conversation with your child. Find tips on how to start these conversations on our web site. Talking early matters.

#TALKEARLY Learn more at RESPONSIBILITY.ORG

ALCOHOL AND ITS RISKS FOR TEENAGERS

Young people are at greater risk of alcohol-related harm than adults. As the brain keeps developing into your mid-twenties, drinking alcohol as a teenager can greatly increase the risk of damage to the developing brain. It can also lead to problems with alcohol later in life. Teenagers are likely to drink more than older people. Drinking heavily over a short period of time with the intention of becoming drunk is known as binge drinking. Binge drinking is also defined as drinking more than the recommended level of four standard drinks on any one occasion

Common effects of binge drinking episodes include: hangovers, headaches, nausea, vomiting and shakiness. As well as increasing the risk of short- and long-term health problems, binge drinking can lead to young people taking risks and putting themselves in dangerous situations, such as drunk driving and having unsafe sex. Drunk driving and other risky behaviours increase the risk of alcohol-related harm, such as injury or death.

Alcohol impairs judgement. Teenagers are more likely to engage in unsafe sexual practices (such as having sexual intercourse without a condom) when they have been drinking. Risks associated with unsafe sex include: sexual abuse, exposure to sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and/or possible pregnancy.



Brains More Vulnerable to Alcohol

- Alcohol can cause **short and long-term harm** to developing brain and bodies.
- Adolescents need only drink **half** as much to suffer the same **negative effects**.
- Perform **worse** in school.
- **Increased risk of** social problems, depression, suicidal thoughts, and violence.

Association, *Harmful Consequences of Alcohol Use on the Brains of Adolescents and College*, 2007



ALCOHOL AND IMPAIRED BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IN TEENAGERS

Drinking alcohol can affect how the brain develops in people under the age of 25. People under 15 years of age are particularly at risk. Teenage brains are still developing and the areas of the brain that undergo the most dramatic changes during the teenage years are the frontal lobe and hippocampus. These areas are associated with motivation, impulse control and addiction. Alcohol is a neurotoxin, which means it can poison the brain. One of the effects of excessive alcohol use is that it interferes with vitamin B absorption, which prevents the brain from working properly. Long-term drinking above the recommended levels may lead to a range of disorders, collectively known as alcohol-related brain injury (ARBI). Symptoms can include learning and memory problems, and difficulties with balance.

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ROLE MODELS FOR TEENAGERS ARE THEIR PARENTS AND CARERS.

Abuse of alcohol can be linked to the abuse of other drugs. Taking alcohol with other drugs that also suppress the central nervous system, such as heroin and benzodiazepines, can be particularly risky. It can cause a person's breathing and heart rate to decrease to dangerous levels and increase the risk of overdose. The combination of alcohol and drugs (including cannabis) can also lead to increased risk taking, making it difficult to drive or carry out other activities, with the potential to harm others as well as the drinker.

PREVENTING ALCOHOL ABUSE IN TEENAGERS



TALK CONNECT PREVENT

Talk2 Prevent

WHY SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING?

Parents should talk about alcohol and drinking with their high school seniors long before they leave for college. Research has found that teens whose parents talked with them about avoiding alcohol before they begin college are more likely to not use or limit alcohol.

For help for addiction, [Facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent](https://www.facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent)

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
Research shows that drinking alcohol before age 21 can interfere with brain development, causing potential learning impediments well into the early 20s.

VIOLENCE AND CRIME
Ninety five percent of violent crimes on college campuses are alcohol-related.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE
More than 97,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are victims of alcohol related sexual assault. The majority of college rapes (90 percent) involve alcohol use by either the victim or the assailant.

ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES
Alcohol use among students is associated with poor grades, absenteeism and higher rates of school dropout.

21 - IT'S THE LAW
In New York state if you are under the age of 21, it is a violation of the law to possess alcohol with the intent to consume. Youth under 21 who drink and drive can lose their licenses for up to one year for small amounts of alcohol and face jail time for larger amounts of alcohol found in their systems.

You can help keep kids safe from alcohol and drugs. Learn how. [Facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent](https://www.facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent)

According to research, there are many important factors that help to reduce the likelihood of a young person abusing alcohol. Good parental role modelling is the main factor as well as the following:

- trying to have a good relationship and open communication between you and your child.
- supporting them having a sense of belonging somewhere, such as in the family, their school or a sporting club.
- reinforcing their positive achievements and experiences at school.
- encouraging a supportive relationship with a role model outside of the family.
- looking for opportunities for them to contribute to their community.
- helping them feel respected and cared for.

WHAT TO TEACH ABOUT ALCOHOL

- Offer good role modelling.
- Start teaching your child about alcohol and its risks from an early age.
- Deal with stress in healthy ways that don't involve alcohol.
- Explain the downside of heavy drinking, such as vomiting, head spins, passing out and hangovers.
- Educate your teenager on the links between drinking and dangerous behaviour, such as unsafe sex.
- Teach your teenager sensible tactics such as how to say no.
- Talk about the dangers of drunk-driving and plan alternatives together, such as public transport, designated drivers or calling home.
- Encourage your teenager to talk with his/her friends about the dangers of alcohol, so they can come up with ways to look out for each other.