



To all AHS Senior Families:

Congratulations on achieving this amazing milestone! The Ashland community is proud of your senior's accomplishments and is excited about the next steps of your family's journey.

Whether your senior is heading to college, the military, the work force, or other path, Decisions at Every Turn is committed to helping support Ashland students continue to make healthy choices regarding their physical, behavioral, and social health.

To assist graduates as they transition into their next chapter, we have compiled parent and teen resources to help with ensuring that celebrations and next steps are safe and healthy. We hope that families use these resources to guide conversations about making healthy choices a priority today and into the future.

Good luck!

Ashland's Decisions at Every Turn Coalition | 65 E. Union Street, Ashland, MA 01702
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SUPPORTING YOUR GRADUATE

FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

- PARENTING FOR PREVENTION: PROM & GRADUATION SAFETY
- PARENTING FOR PREVENTION: PREPARING YOUR TEEN FOR COLLEGE
- FALL SEMESTER - A TIME FOR PARENTS TO DISCUSS THE RISKS OF DRINKING IN COLLEGE
- FACTS ON COLLEGE STUDENT DRINKING
- PARENT/CAREGIVER RESOURCES

FOR STUDENTS

- TIPS FOR TEENS - THE TRUTH ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING
- UNDERAGE DRINKING - MYTHS VS. FACTS
- STUDENT RESOURCES





Parenting for Prevention: Prom & Graduation Safety

Talk with your Teen about Celebrating the Season Safely

Prom and graduation season can be a high-risk time of year for alcohol use by teens. Your son or daughter may feel additional pressure to drink at an after-prom party or believe that a few drinks after graduation is a "rite of passage". Remind your teen that drinking under the age of 21 is illegal and poses numerous potential risks to their health and safety. Talking with your teen now about your expectations, listening to their perspective and staying involved can help set the foundation for good decision-making while they celebrate these milestones.

In the weeks leading up to prom and graduation

Take advantage of small opportunities leading up to the big day to talk with your teen about prom and graduation. Reassure your teenager that you understand prom and graduation night pressures and fears and talk about them.

- Have a conversation with your teen about substance use. Be clear that you do not want your teen to drink alcohol or use other drugs.
- Discuss your expectations regarding alcohol use, driving, and curfew. Make sure your teen understands the consequences for violating the rules.
- Prepare your teen for peer pressure. Encourage them to make the right choices. Acknowledge and praise the good decisions your teen has made in the past.
- Practice refusal skills. Come up with ideas for handling challenging situations such as being offered an alcoholic drink or a ride with someone who has been drinking.
- Share in their enthusiasm and support them during this exciting time.
- Remind them that you are available if they have any questions or concerns.



Tips for hosting a safe prom or graduation party

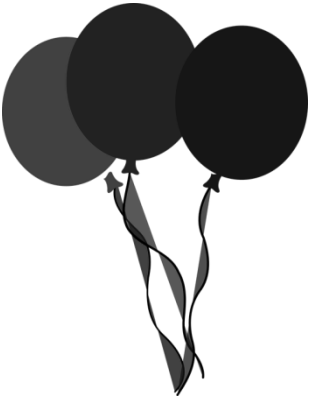
Hosting an after-prom or graduation party in your home can be a memorable occasion for you, your teen and their friends. You can provide a substance-free and safe space for celebrating by following a few tips:



- Set clear rules and consequences for violating these rules in advance. Communicate the rules ahead of time to your guests.
- Do not serve alcohol. Do not allow alcohol to be brought into your home.
- Greet guests at the door. Check all bags to see that alcohol is not being snuck into the house.
- Stay at the party. Occasionally walk through the party area to ensure that guests are safe.
- Guests may not leave and return to the party without supervision or permission.
- Do not allow uninvited guests to crash the party.
- Secure all alcohol. Lock liquor cabinets and remove alcohol from refrigerator and put in a safe place.
- If you suspect a teen guest is intoxicated, contact his or her parents or guardians immediately.

What you need to know before your teen attends a party

The more you talk with your teen about good decision-making and your expectations regarding substance use, the more prepared they will be to make healthy choices, such as refusing alcohol or other drugs. Help them deal with the possibility of additional pressures to make risky choices when celebrating prom or graduation at a friend's house.



- Know where your teen is going, who your teen will be with and when you expect your teen to be home.
- Remind your teen to wear a seatbelt (when driving or as a passenger) and to never get in the car with someone who has been drinking or using any other substance, like marijuana.
- Decide on a code word that your teen can use with you if they are uncomfortable. Let your teen know that you will be available to pick them up if they feel unsafe.
- Remind your teen of the refusal skills you practiced with them.
- Encourage your teen to stay with a group of friends throughout the night and to watch out for each other.
- Tell them not to leave any possessions or food/beverages unattended.
- Make sure your teen's cell phone is fully charged before leaving home for the night.
- Stay up until your teen returns and remind them how happy you are that they arrived home safely.

Social Host Law – Q&A

What is a Social Host?

A Social Host is anyone (adult or minor) who is in control of the premises and who furnishes alcohol or allows it to be consumed on those premises.

Am I breaking the law if I allow my child's underage guests to consume alcohol in my home?

Yes. The legal drinking age in Massachusetts is 21. It is against the law to serve or provide alcohol to underage guests or to allow them to drink alcohol in your home or on other property you control. If you do, you may be prosecuted criminally. The penalty is a fine of up to \$2,000, imprisonment for up to a year, or both.

Can I be sued if my child or an underage guest at my home drinks alcohol and injures someone?

Yes. You may be financially responsible if your child or underage guest injures another person (or himself) after having consumed alcohol, if you controlled the supply of the alcohol, made it available, or served it. Civil judgments can be for millions of dollars.

What if my child allows underage guests to drink or possess alcohol at my home or other property I control?

You or your child may be charged criminally. For you to be found guilty under the Social Host Law, the Commonwealth must prove that you or your child knowingly or intentionally supplied, gave, provided, or allowed minors to possess alcohol at your home or other property you controlled. You or your child may also be sued civilly.

Does the Social Host Law apply if I rent a hotel room for my daughter's party?

Yes, since you control the hotel room, the Social Host Law applies.

Will my homeowner's policy cover the costs of litigation and any judgment against me or my child?

You may or may not be covered, especially if the underage drinker causes injury or death by use of an automobile. Many insurance policies do not cover situations where criminal conduct is involved.

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/essexda/docs/publications/alcohol-and-drugs/social-host-tagged.pdf>

RESOURCES

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/GraduationFacts/graduationFact.htm>

<http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AlcoholFacts&Stats/AlcoholFacts&Stats.htm>

http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff_HTML/makediff.htm

Teen Safe After-Prom Safety

<http://teen-safe.org/faq/>

Social Host Liability

<http://socialhostliability.org/>

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Please visit <http://www.AshlandDecisions.org/parent-tip-sheets.html> for our complete library of tip sheets.

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Parenting for Prevention: Preparing Your Teen for College

Parents are still the greatest influence

College can be overwhelming for parents and new students heading off for the first time. As with any new experience, children look to their parents for clues, support, and guidance on how to navigate safely through new waters. At the same time, your young adult is looking to be more independent. As your family approaches the first-time college experience think about ways to balance expectations, encourage autonomy, and emphasize the importance of choices and consequences.

Before the Big Day

It's a big day for everyone and expectations are high, but one of the best things parents can do to prepare their teen is to be honest about the transition to college. It will be an adjustment and it may take time to make friends, adapt to classes, or adjust to a new schedule. It's important to be realistic about the early college experience.

Parents can take positive steps to help alleviate the natural feelings of stress or anxiety that some students may feel. By initiating these conversations in the weeks leading up to drop-off, you can create a space for your son or daughter to express their concerns or talk about their fears. Together, you can help your teen develop positive coping skills for dealing with difficult issues that may arise. Teens who employ healthy and productive strategies when confronted with challenge are less likely to use substances as a way to deal with a demanding situation.

Also remember that some teens are eager to start college life and are more excited than scared. That's OK too. You can still use this time to share in their excitement, answer questions, and help them prepare for change.

How to Start a Conversation about Alcohol Use

- Look for opportunities to initiate a conversation naturally. When selecting classes, living arrangements, or a roommate, you can discuss how alcohol use may interfere with academic success, the quality of life, or relationships.
- Make your "No Alcohol" policy very clear.
- Emphasize how underage drinking can compromise physical, social, and emotional health and safety.
- Show your willingness to help find productive alternatives to drinking. Help them explore on-campus groups and activities or substance-free residence halls.
- Remind them to be aware of alcohol use by other students – drinking by others can interfere with their own studying, stable living conditions, or present unsafe situations.
- Reinforce the message that underage drinking is a risk and a choice that has consequences.

Tips for a Smooth Transition

- Be supportive without being overly involved
- Students should feel empowered to be independent and to advocate for themselves
- Listen to your teen's concerns
- Allow your teen to gather information, weigh the pros and cons, and make their own decisions
- Give them space to explore their new surroundings and establish relationships with professors, peers, and roommates
- Encourage on-campus involvement
- Encourage healthy eating, sleep, & exercise habits

The First 6 Weeks are Key

New students appear most likely to initiate or increase alcohol use during their first six weeks of college. Stay involved during this critical time. Encourage healthy behaviors. Remind your teen about alcohol risks and look for subtle changes in behavior or habits that might be a predictor of a more serious problem. About one-third of first-year students do not enroll for their second year.

- ✓ Check in.
- ✓ Make small talk. Ask about roommates, classes, and navigating campus.
- ✓ Pay attention to your teen's activities in the early weeks of school. With an increased amount of "down time" during the early days of school many students initiate heavy drinking, which can interfere with successful adaptation to campus life.
- ✓ Understand the school's "parent notification" policy regarding alcohol use.
- ✓ Make sure your teen understands the school's alcohol policies and penalties for underage drinking, using a fake ID, assault, driving under the influence and other alcohol-related offenses.
- ✓ Be certain they understand how alcohol can lead to violence, sexual assault, falls, alcohol poisoning, and other risky behavior.

What Parents Need to Know: The Myth about Responsible Drinking

As parents, we are accustomed to preparing our children for what lies ahead ... teaching them how to cook, drive a car, or balance a checkbook. It may seem to make sense then that to prepare teens for "college life" parents should teach them how to "drink responsibly" at home before leaving for college. In fact, the opposite is true.

Parents who provide their teens with alcohol and a place to consume it may think they are teaching their children "responsible drinking." A new review of studies concludes this view is misguided. Researchers found parental provision of alcohol is associated with increased teen alcohol use. In some cases, parental provision of alcohol is also linked with increased heavy episodic drinking and higher rates of alcohol-related problems, the researchers report in the [Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs](#).

"We suspect there is a surprising amount of 'social hosting' going on—parents providing alcohol for their teens and their friends," said study co-author Ken C. Winters, Ph.D., Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota Medical School. "Parents probably aren't aware that social hosting could have criminal implications in some states if things take a bad turn. I can appreciate that social hosting is often done with good intentions. Parents think they are preventing something worse by having their kids drink at home with their friends. But the risks are great."

Senior author Dr. Övgü Kaynak and her co-authors reviewed 22 studies that examined the association between parental provision of alcohol and teen drinking. Based on their findings, they recommend that parents discourage drinking until their children reach the legal drinking age of 21.

Parents influence their children's risk for alcohol use in both direct and indirect ways, Winters notes. Indirectly, parents can influence their teens' behavior by failing to monitor their activities while their child still lives at home, having permissive attitudes toward underage drinking, expressing direct approval of underage drinking, or simply by providing unguarded access to alcohol at home. More direct ways of influencing teens' drinking behavior include offering to buy alcohol for them, supplying alcohol for a teen party, or allowing their teen to drink at home, either supervised or unsupervised.

"The most worrisome things parents can do are to model poor behavior by drinking excessively in front of their teens, and to provide alcohol to their teens," Winters said. "I'm not talking about giving a sip of alcohol or an occasional glass of an alcoholic beverage with a meal for an older teenager. I'm referring to parents who host a drinking party and provide alcohol, thinking they will be able to make it safe. It creates more problems than it solves. "The researchers say there is little research to support the notion that it is possible to "teach" children to drink alcohol responsibly. They write their review "suggests that by allowing alcohol use at a young age, parents might increase the risk for progression toward unsupervised drinking more rapidly than it would otherwise have been." Allowing teens to drink may instill a sense of comfort in alcohol use, which could increase their tendency to drink, with or without their parents present. Parents may be giving their teens subtle messages about drinking without even realizing it, Winters notes. For instance, they may not take the opportunity to say something negative about underage drinking if they see it in a movie or TV show they are watching with their teen.

The researchers said they want parents to understand that allowing teens to drink underage, even when supervised by the parent, is always associated with a greater likelihood of drinking during adolescence over time. Social hosting is never a good idea, they emphasize. "Adolescents who attend parties where parents supply alcohol are at increased risk for heavy episodic drinking, alcohol-related problems, and drinking and driving," they wrote.

Source: <http://drugfree.org/learn/drug-and-alcohol-news/parents-teaching-teens-responsible-drinking-myth-study>

Child Development Institute: 4 Ways to Help Prepare your Teen for College

<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/4-ways-help-teen-prepare-college/#ixzz3n42zytMZ>

College Drinking: Changing the Culture

<https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/Default.aspx>

College Drinking: Changing the Culture – Resources for Parents and Students

<https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/ParentsandStudents/Parents/Default.aspx>

College Parent Central

<https://www.collegeparentcentral.com>

How to Say Goodbye to Your College-bound Teen

<http://micheleborba.com/saying-goodbye-to-a-college-bound-teen/>

National Center for Biotechnology Information: Can Parents Prevent Heavy Episodic Drinking by Allowing Teens to Drink at Home?

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2942998/>

Talking with your College Bound Young Adult about Alcohol

<https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/videos/soyv.aspx>

Portions of this tip sheet were adapted from some of these resources

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As college students arrive on campus this fall, it is typically a time of new experiences, new friendships, and making memories that will last a lifetime. Unfortunately for many, it is also a time of harmful and underage drinking and of dealing with its aftermath—from vandalism, sexual aggression, and other forms of violence to injuries and death. In light of the current coronavirus pandemic, it is particularly important this fall for parents to urge college students to take measures to protect their health.

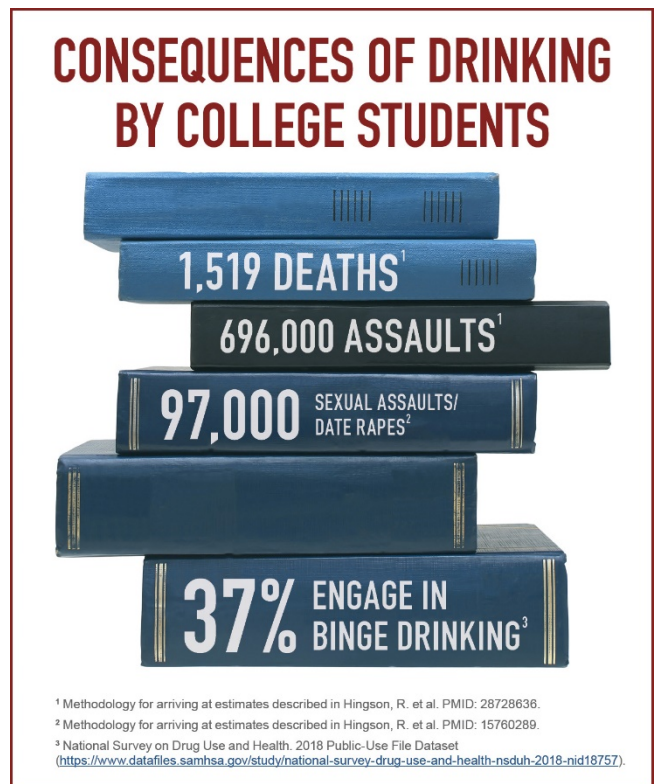
Alcohol and COVID-19 Don't Mix—Encourage Additional Caution About Alcohol During the Pandemic

Drinking alcohol impairs both physical and mental abilities, and it also decreases inhibitions. Reduced inhibitions from drinking and being intoxicated may affect a young person's ability to take the precautions needed to reduce the risk of contracting the coronavirus or spreading it to others, such as maintaining appropriate physical distance and wearing a mask. Encourage students to limit how much alcohol they or friends are consuming and remind underage students not to drink any alcohol. Students should also know the steps needed to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 if schools have resumed in-person or hybrid classes or while participating in activities outside of school. This includes following the everyday practices recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to [reduce the risk of contracting and spreading the coronavirus](#), as well as following all guidelines and procedures that have been established by individual colleges and universities.

Rates and Consequences of College Drinking

According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 54.9 percent of full-time college students ages 18 to 22 drank alcohol in the past month, and 36.9 percent engaged in binge drinking in the past month. NSDUH defines binge drinking as 5 or more drinks on an occasion for men and 4 or more drinks on an occasion for women.* In addition, 9.6 percent engaged in heavy alcohol use (defined by NSDUH as binge drinking on 5 or more days in the past month). These binge drinking and heavy alcohol use rates are both higher than for those not attending college.¹

The consequences of harmful and underage drinking by college students are more significant, more destructive, and more costly than many parents realize. And these consequences affect students whether they drink or not.



* NIAAA defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent—or 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter—or higher. For a typical adult, this pattern corresponds to consuming 5 or more drinks (male), or 4 or more drinks (female), in about 2 hours.

The most recent statistics from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) indicate that drinking by college students ages 18 to 24 contributes to an estimated 1,519 student deaths each year.² In addition, there are an estimated 696,000 assaults by students who had been drinking and 97,000 cases of sexual assault or date rape each year.³

Early Weeks Are Critical

Although some students come to college already having some experience with alcohol, certain aspects of college life, such as unstructured time, the widespread availability of alcohol, inconsistent enforcement of underage drinking laws, and limited interactions with parents and other adults, can intensify the problem.

The first 6 weeks of freshman year are a vulnerable time for harmful and underage college drinking and for alcohol-related consequences because of student expectations and social pressures at the start of the academic year. The coronavirus pandemic will create additional stress and uncertainty this fall, so support for students will be critical.

Parents Can Help

An often overlooked protective factor involves the continuing influence of parents during the college years. Research shows that students who abstain from drinking often do so because their parents discussed alcohol use and its adverse consequences with them. During these crucial early weeks, parents can do a number of things to stay involved.

Parents can help by:

- » Talking with students about the dangers of harmful and underage college drinking—such as the possible legal and school penalties for underage drinking, and the risks of alcohol overdose, unintentional injuries, violence, unsafe sexual behavior, academic failure, and other adverse consequences.
- » Reaching out periodically and keeping the lines of communication open while staying alert for possible alcohol-related problems.
- » Reminding students to feel free to reach out to them to share information about their daily activities and to ask for help if needed.
- » Learning about the school's alcohol prevention and emergency intervention efforts as well as the school's policies and procedures in place this fall for the coronavirus pandemic. (See "Resources Are Available" below.)
- » Making sure students know the signs of alcohol overdose or an alcohol-related problem, and how to help.

Resources Are Available

For parents who want to discuss the consequences of drinking with their college students, a variety of helpful resources are available from NIAAA at <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov>.

These resources include a parents' guide that offers research-based information plus helpful advice on choosing the right college, staying involved during freshman year, and getting assistance if faced with an alcohol-related crisis. The website also provides links to alcohol policies at colleges across the country, an interactive diagram of how alcohol affects the human body, and an interactive alcohol cost calculator.



FACTS

on College Student Drinking

MARCH 2021

FAST FACTS

- Of the 19 million undergraduate students enrolled in college in 2018, 9 million were under age 21, the U.S. minimum legal drinking age.¹
- College students have an increasing risk for an alcohol use disorder as they near the legal drinking age. While 104,000 of 18-year-old college students met the criteria for an alcohol use disorder in 2019, that number more than doubled to 231,000 by age 21.²
- High blood alcohol concentrations and impairment levels associated with binge drinking place those who binge drink and those around them at a substantially elevated risk for negative consequences, such as traffic accidents, injury-related deaths, sexual assault, violent crimes, and reduced academic performance.³
- Alcohol contributes to an estimated 1,519 deaths per year among college students.⁴

*Current drinking = past 30-day use. In 2015, SAMHSA redefined binge drinking as five or more drinks for men and four or more drinks for women on the same occasion on at least one day in the past 30 days. Heavy alcohol use = binge drinking on five or more days in the past 30 days.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

COLLEGE DRINKING OVERVIEW

Full-time college students tend to drink more than others in their age group. In 2019, 53 percent of full-time college students drank alcohol in the past month. Of those, 33 percent reported binge drinking and 8 percent reported heavy drinking in the past month. Among individuals ages 18 to 22 not enrolled full-time in college, the percentages were 44 percent, 28 percent, and 6 percent, respectively.⁵

Many students may come to college with established drinking habits. Among 12th graders in 2019, 59 percent had already tried alcohol and 41 percent said they had been drunk at least once.⁶

Risk of alcohol misuse appears to be greater among some college groups. While individual rates of substance misuse vary among fraternities and sororities across campuses, in general, membership in these groups is associated with increased rates of binge drinking and marijuana use.⁷ Among student athletes, 42 percent reported binge drinking in 2018. More than one-quarter of student athletes reported having a hangover, experiencing memory loss, and/or doing something they regretted after drinking.⁸

GENDER TRENDS IN STUDENT DRINKING REVERSE

Rates of current drinking by college males has historically been higher than that of females, but the trend has reversed over time. In 2015, 59 percent of male college students drank alcohol in the past month, compared to 57 percent of females.⁹ By 2019, the percent of males using alcohol each month was 51 percent, compared to 53 percent of females.¹⁰ However, rates of binge and heavy drinking by male students continues to exceed that of female students. In 2019, binge drinking was reported by 35 percent of male students and by 31 percent of female students. Heavy drinking was reported by 10 percent of males and 7 percent of females.¹¹

From 2015 to 2019, more male students than female students ages 19 to 22 reported drinking 10 or more drinks in a row in a two-week period—19 percent compared to 6 percent, respectively. Males also reported greater rates of drinking 15 drinks in a row in a two-week period when compared to females—4 percent compared to less than 1 percent, respectively.¹²

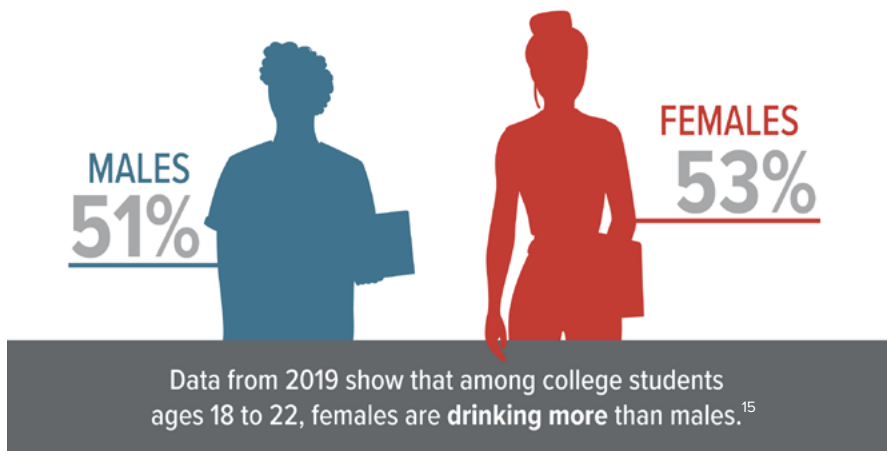
ALCOHOL USE CONSEQUENCES

About one-quarter of college students report having negative academic consequences because of their drinking, including missing class, falling behind in their studies, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.¹³

Each year, among college students ages 18 to 24:

- 3,360,000 drive under the influence of alcohol;
- 696,000 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking;
- 599,000 who are under the influence of alcohol are unintentionally injured;
- 22,219 are hospitalized for an alcohol overdose; and
- 1,519 die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor-vehicle crashes.^{13,14}

COLLEGE STUDENT DRINKING BY GENDER, 2019



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- ¹⁴ Hingson, R., Zha, W., & Smyth, D. (2017). Magnitude and trends in heavy episodic drinking, alcohol-impaired driving, and alcohol-related mortality and overdose hospitalizations among emerging adults of college ages 18–24 in the United States, 1998–2014. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 78(4), 540–548. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5551659/>

For more information about underage drinking prevention, visit www.StopAlcoholAbuse.gov, the web portal of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking.

Visit the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's CollegeAIM website (www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/CollegeAIM/Default.aspx) for a matrix-based decision tool that organizes what is known about college drinking interventions by factors such as the strength of the research evidence and ease of implementation.

To view this fact sheet and similar products online, visit www.store.SAMHSA.gov or call 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

Additionally, NIAAA's *CollegeAIM*—the *College Alcohol Intervention Matrix*, available at <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/CollegeAIM>—is a booklet and website that helps schools and parents address harmful and underage student drinking by identifying effective alcohol interventions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/>

¹ SAMHSA. The estimates are weighted by the person-level analysis weight and derived from the 2018 NSDUH public-use data file. Past-month alcohol use: a drink of an alcoholic beverage (a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, a shot of distilled spirits, or a mixed drink with distilled spirits in it), not counting a sip or two from a drink in the past 30 days. Past-month binge alcohol use: 5 or more drinks on the same occasion for males or 4 or more drinks on the same occasion for females on at least 1 day in the past 30 days. Past-month heavy alcohol use: 5 or more drinks on the same occasion for males or 4 or more drinks on the same occasion for females on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days. Full-time college students: full-time students ages 18 to 22 enrolled in school and at college level. Other persons ages 18–22: those not enrolled in school, enrolled in college part-time, enrolled in other grades either full- or part-time, or enrolled with no other information available. NSDUH 2018 Public-Use File Dataset. Available at: <https://www.datafiles.samhsa.gov/study/national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-2018-nid18757>. Accessed 11/15/19.

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Updated August 2020

SUPPORTING YOUR GRADUATE PARENT/CAREGIVER RESOURCES

COVID 19 PARENT RESOURCES KIT

TIPS TO SUPPORT YOUR TEEN GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

HEALTH TIPS FOR GRADUATES

COLLEGE ISN'T FOR EVERYONE: SCHOOLS, PARENTS CELEBRATE GRADUATES WITH OTHER PLANS

COLLEGE DRINKING: CHANGING THE CULTURE

COLLEGE DRINKING – FACTS FOR PARENTS

ALCOHOL MISUSE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS - WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

FIND YOUR COLLEGE'S ALCOHOL POLICY

COLLEGIATE PARENT

HAVE THE TALK WITH YOUR STUDENT ABOUT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

3 ESSENTIAL HEALTH TOPICS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR STUDENT

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH: A CHECKLIST FOR FAMILIES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS



TIPS for TEENS

UNDERAGE DRINKING

THE TRUTH ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING



**SLANG¹: BOOZE/BREW/
LIQUOR/SAUCE**

GET THE FACTS

UNDERAGE DRINKING IS DANGEROUS. Drinking alcohol can result in poor decision making which can make you less aware of your actions and unable to recognize potential danger. Drinking may also lead to impaired motor coordination, placing you at a greater risk of being injured from falls or vehicle crashes. While intoxicated, you are more likely to engage in unsafe behavior, including drinking and driving, unprotected sex, and aggressive or violent actions.²

UNDERAGE DRINKING CAN BE FATAL. When a person has an alcohol overdose, their breathing and heart rate slows down to dangerous levels. Symptoms include confusion, being unconscious, vomiting, seizures, and trouble breathing. Overdosing on alcohol can lead to permanent brain damage or death. In addition, driving after drinking alcohol can lead to vehicle accidents and deaths.³

UNDERAGE DRINKING CAN BE ADDICTIVE. When someone is unable to stop or control their alcohol use—even when facing serious health, social, or academic consequences—they have an alcohol use disorder that requires treatment. Talking with a counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or other trained professional can help.⁴

? Q&A

Q. IS IT REALLY UNSAFE TO DRINK UNTIL I'M 21?

A. YES. The risks of underage drinking are high. Research suggests that drinking during the teen years could interfere with normal brain development and increase the risk of developing an alcohol use disorder later in life.⁵

Q. WHY DO MY FRIENDS DRINK ALCOHOL IF IT IS UNSAFE?

A. Many teens experience peer pressure to drink alcohol, and some are looking for a way to cope with stress; however, underage drinking will result in more problems—not fewer. In 2019, about 4.2 million young people aged 12 to 20 reported binge drinking (for males, 5 or more drinks, and for females, 4 or more drinks on the same occasion within a few hours) at least once in the past month.⁶

Q. MY PARENTS USED TO DRINK WHEN THEY WERE UNDERAGE. WHY CAN'T I?

A. Minimum drinking age laws exist for a reason—they help keep everyone safer. After states increased the legal drinking age to 21, there were fewer car crashes. Also, drinking during the previous month for 18- to 20-year-olds declined after all states adopted a minimum legal drinking age of 21, from 59 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1991.⁷

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Underage drinking is dangerous and can be deadly. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

LEARN MORE:

Get the latest information on how underage drinking affects the brain and body at teens.drugabuse.gov.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION, CONTACT:

SAMHSA

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

www.samhsa.gov | store.samhsa.gov



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration



BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

KNOW THE LAW. The minimum drinking age in the United States is 21. Having a national minimum drinking age saves lives and improves health. There is even evidence that the law protects people from other drug dependence and suicide.⁸

2

KNOW THE RISKS. Underage drinking contributes to more than 4,300 deaths among people below the age of 21 in the U.S. each year.⁹ Drinking under age 21 is also strongly linked with death from alcohol poisoning.¹⁰

3

LOOK AROUND YOU. Although alcohol is the most commonly used substance by teens, most teens don't drink. Each year, teens' alcohol use continues to drop—in 2019, rates of past-year alcohol use by students in 10th and 12th grades were at a 5-year low.¹¹



MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR
RESOURCES USED IN THIS

"TIPS for TEENS,"

visit store.samhsa.gov or call
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)
(English and Español).

PEP21-03-03-001 | RELEASED 2021

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SAMHSA cumple con las leyes federales de derechos civiles aplicables y no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo.



KNOW THE SIGNS

How can you tell if a friend is using alcohol? Potential side effects and symptoms include:¹²

- **Changes in mood, including anger and irritability**
- **Academic and/or behavioral problems in school**
- **Changing groups of friends**
- **Less interest in activities and/or care in appearance**



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS USING ALCOHOL?

BE A FRIEND. SAVE A LIFE.

Encourage your friend to stop drinking or seek help from a parent, teacher, or other caring adult.

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Español, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

or visit the SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at: findtreatment.samhsa.gov

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SAMHSA

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www.samhsa.gov | store.samhsa.gov

^{1,3,11} National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). (2020). Drug Facts: Alcohol. Retrieved from <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/alcohol>

^{2,5,9} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2018). *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*. Retrieved from <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/rtc2018.aspx>

^{4,12} National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). (2020). Underage Drinking. Retrieved from <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking>

⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. (HHS Publication No. PEP20-07-01-001, NSDUH Series H-55). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

^{7,10} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). *Age 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/minimum-legal-drinking-age.htm>

⁸ Ibid.



UNDERAGE DRINKING

MYTHS —VERSUS— FACTS

You probably see and hear a lot about alcohol—from TV, movies, music, social media, and your friends. But what are the real facts? Here are some common myths and facts about alcohol use.

MYTH

All of the other kids drink alcohol. You need to drink to fit in.

FACT

Don't believe the hype: Most young people don't drink alcohol! Research shows that almost 82 percent of 12- to 20-year-olds haven't had a drink in the past month.¹

MYTH

Drinking alcohol will make people like you.

FACT

There's nothing likable about stumbling around, passing out, or puking on yourself. Drinking alcohol can also make your breath smell bad.

MYTH

Drinking is a good way to loosen up at parties.

FACT

Drinking is a dumb way to loosen up. It can make you act foolish, say things you shouldn't say, and do things you wouldn't normally do. In fact, drinking can increase the likelihood of fights and risky sexual activity.²

MYTH

Alcohol isn't as harmful as other drugs.

FACT

Your brain doesn't stop growing until about age 25, and drinking can affect how it develops.³ Plus, alcohol increases your risk for many diseases, such as cancer.⁴ It can also cause you to have accidents and get injured, sending you to the emergency room.⁵

MYTH

Beer and wine are safer than liquor.

FACT

Alcohol is alcohol. A 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a shot of liquor (1.5 ounces) all have the same amount of alcohol.⁶

MYTH

You can sober up quickly by taking a cold shower or drinking coffee.

FACT

There's no magic cure to help you sober up. One drink can take at least an hour to leave your body and sometimes takes even longer.⁷ And there's nothing you can do to make that happen quicker.

MYTH

There's no reason to wait until you're 21 to drink.

FACT

When you're young, drinking alcohol can make learning new things more difficult.⁸ Also, people who begin drinking before they turn 15 are more likely to develop a drinking problem at some point in their lives than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older.⁹

MYTH

You can drink alcohol and you won't get into trouble.

FACT

All states and Washington, D.C. have 21-year-old minimum-drinking-age laws.¹⁰ If you get caught drinking, you might have to pay a fine, do community service, take alcohol awareness classes, or even spend time in jail.



Think you or your friend has an alcohol problem?

Don't wait—get help. Talk to a parent, doctor, teacher, or anyone you trust.

If you're more comfortable speaking with someone you don't know, call the confidential SAMHSA National Helpline at 800-662-HELP (800-662-4357) (English and Spanish).

You can find substance abuse treatment services near you at [samhsa.gov/treatment](https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment).

**MORE
INFO**

Learn more about underage drinking at
[stopalcoholabuse.gov](https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov).

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. PEP20-07-01-001, NSDUH Series H-55). Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2019-nsduh-annual-national-report>

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*. Retrieved from <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/rtc2018.aspx>

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/rtc2018.aspx>

⁴ National Cancer Institute. (2020). *Cancer Trends Progress Report: Alcohol Consumption*. Retrieved from <https://www.progressreport.cancer.gov/prevention/alcohol>

⁵ Naeger, S. (2017). Emergency department visits involving underage alcohol use: 2010 to 2013. *The CBHSQ Report*. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD. Retrieved from https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_3061/ShortReport-3061.html

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Alcohol and Public Health: Frequently Asked Questions About Alcohol*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>

⁷ Cederbaum, A. I. (2012). Alcohol metabolism. *Clinics in Liver Disease*, 16(4), 667–685. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3484320/>

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). *Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking*. Retrieved from <https://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/resources/reporttocongress/rtc2018.aspx>

⁹ Grant, B. F., & Dawson, D. A. (1997). Age at onset of alcohol use and its association with DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence: Results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey. *Journal of Substance Abuse*, 9, 103–110.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK424850/>

SUPPORTING YOUR GRADUATE STUDENT RESOURCES

43 LIFE SKILLS TO KNOW BEFORE COLLEGE

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS ASK COLLEGE STUDENTS BURNING QUESTIONS: COVID-19 EDITION

college drinking: changing the culture
facts about alcohol overdose (alcohol poisoning)
alcohol & you: an interactive body
alcohol calculators
alcohol myths
getting help

21 Sober Activities to do This Weekend Instead of Drinking Alcohol

College Student Guide to Avoiding Drug & Alcohol Abuse

YOUNG ADULTS: CARE FOR YOURSELF ONE NEW WAY EACH DAY

HOW TO HELP A FRIEND

