



Fact Sheet: Underage Drinking Risk Factors

Underage peer pressure to try alcohol is real, but so are the consequences. Alcohol abuse is often linked to criminal behavior and social and health problems. Here are a few key statistics:

- Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes and contributes significantly to suicides, homicides and fatal injuries. In fact, more teens die as a result of alcohol use than all other illegal drugs combined.
- Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.
- Alcohol is a major factor in unprotected sex among youth, increasing their risk of contracting HIV or other transmitted diseases.
- There are approximately 1.5 billion episodes of binge drinking among persons 18 years or older in the U.S. each year.
- The brain continues to develop into the mid-20s, so alcohol abuse at a young age could lead to brain damage, memory problems and harm to other major organs.
- Youth who start drinking before age 21 are seven times more likely to develop an alcohol problem.
- 4,700 teens and young adults die every year because of excessive alcohol consumption.
- People between the ages of 11 and 20 drink 11 percent of all alcohol consumed in the U.S. and 90 percent of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinking.
- In Georgia, 23 percent of youth consume alcohol before the age of 13 and 24 percent of high school students reported riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol. In addition, 82 percent of high school students who consumed alcohol did so at their own house or another home.

You can find more underage drinking facts and resources at www.heartsforfamilies.org/gyac.



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