



### WHAT IS UNDERAGE DRINKING?

The national legal drinking age is 21. When anyone under the age of 21 consumes alcohol, it's against the law. Underage drinking can have serious consequences to a young person's health, development and future.

### YOUR FUTURE

Breaking an alcoholic beverage law can lead to criminal charges before your 21st birthday and will remain on your permanent criminal record.

It is illegal for those under the age of 21 to drive with any measurable level of Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). This zero-tolerance law is in effect in all 50 states. Get caught drinking and driving and you will be arrested and charged in criminal court. Get convicted of a DWI/ DUI and you could lose your license.

Many people think creating and using fake IDs is a harmless part of growing up. But using or creating a fake ID or driver's license to acquire liquor is a felony. Penalties vary but usually include jail time, fines, community service and suspension of your driver's license. As criminal records are public information, for the rest of your life you will have to check "Yes" in employment

questionnaires asking if "you have ever been convicted of a felony."

Not having a driver's license and having a permanent criminal record is no way to start off your life. The best choice is to steer clear of underage drinking.

### EFFECTS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING ON THE BRAIN

The brain continues to develop from birth through the teen years and into the mid-20s. Drinking alcohol while your brain is still growing can cause permanent brain damage. The hippocampus, the part of the brain where learning and memory are located, is proven to be as much as 10 percent smaller in teens that drink alcohol. The prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain that deals with decision-making, can also be damaged by alcohol. That's why people act drunk when consuming alcohol. Being drunk is actually a form of brain damage.

### ALCOHOL, THE BRAIN AND ADDICTION

Underage drinking increases the chance of alcohol addiction. After being damaged by alcohol, the brain attempts to rewire itself. This repair process often hard-wires the learned behavior of alcohol dependence. Alcohol dependence rates are highest between the ages of 18 and 20. Of adults who started drinking before age 15, 40 percent say they have the signs of alcohol dependence. That rate is four times higher than for adults who didn't drink until they were age 21.

“ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE CAN TAKE YEARS OFF A PERSON'S LIFE. WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS WITH ALCOHOL ADDICTION, IT AFFECTS EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR LIFE. A PERSON CAN SUFFER WITH ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE FOR YEARS UNLESS THEY GET HELP.”

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm)

#### National Institute on Alcohol Abuse

[www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/underage-drinking)

# UNDERAGE DRINKING

YOU BINGE, YOU BUST



**in the know**

© 2022 Prevention & Treatment Resource Press  
877-329-0578  
[www.PTRPress.com](http://www.PTRPress.com) • product #PB-DA145  
This pamphlet may not be copied.

## OTHER NASTY EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON THE BODY

Cirrhosis of the liver is caused by chronic alcohol consumption. Scar tissue replaces normal, healthy tissue and prevents the liver from working properly. A person cannot live without a functioning liver. Cirrhosis is the 9th leading cause of death by disease in this country.

## BINGE DRINKING

Young people often drink in “binges” – a lot at one time. Average underage drinkers consume over five drinks on a single occasion. Five drinks in a row is considered binge drinking which can lead to alcohol poisoning or even death.

## WHAT IS ALCOHOL POISONING?



Alcohol is poison. The symptoms of a hangover (grogginess, splitting headache, dehydration, and vomiting) are signs of alcohol poisoning. Alcohol poisoning is serious and sometimes deadly. When the body absorbs alcohol, it directly impacts the central nervous system, slowing breathing, heart rate and the gag reflex. This can lead to choking, coma and death. Alcohol poisoning occurs after drinking

too many alcoholic beverages in a short period of time. Chugging, drinking games and contests can very well leave a person severely ill or dead.



## KNOW THE SIGNS OF ALCOHOL POISONING

- Unconsciousness or “Passing Out”
- Confusion
- Vomiting while unconscious
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Blue tinged or purplish skin
- Low body temperature
- Irregular heart rhythm
- Slow heartbeat/pulse

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR ALCOHOL POISONING

- Don’t leave the affected person alone
- Call 9-1-1 for medical assistance
- Place the person on his/her side to reduce the risk of choking on vomit
- If breathing becomes slower than six breaths per minute, perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation at once

- If you no longer feel a pulse or if the pulse goes below 40 beats per minute, perform CPR until medical help arrives
- Explain to emergency services how much alcohol the person has ingested

## WHAT IS BAC?

The effects of alcohol on your system depend on your Blood Alcohol Concentration (or BAC). Factors that affect your BAC include how strong the alcoholic beverage is, how quickly and how much you drink and how empty your stomach is at the time you drink. If your body absorbs more alcohol than it can eliminate, your BAC goes up.

## UNDERAGE DRINKING IS A RISKY BUSINESS...

### Risk 1 – Drinking and Driving

Forty-one percent of all teen automobile crashes involve alcohol. Thirty-two percent of all teen driving deaths are alcohol related. Never drink and drive, and never ride with someone who has been drinking.

### Risk 2 – Sexual Assault, Pregnancy, STDs and AIDS

Abusing alcohol often leads to making poor judgments. Underage drinking increases the risk of being a victim of a sexual assault. At least 50 percent of student sexual assaults involve alcohol.

Alcohol also plays a role in risky sexual behaviors, increasing the chance of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS.

### Risk 3 – Increased Death and Injury

Each year, over 5,000 people under the age of 21 die from underage drinking, this

includes about 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 as a result of homicides, 300 from suicide, as well as hundreds from other injuries such as falls, burns and drowning.

### Risk 4 – Violence



Alcohol is a factor in 70 percent of violent behavior on campuses and is involved in 64 percent of all homicides. Fights, domestic violence, family disruptions, are just some of the problems that come from alcohol abuse.

### Risk 5 – Suicide

Ethanol, the drug found in alcohol, is a depressant. Young people who abuse alcohol are mentally depressed, suffer from high stress and are at higher risk of committing suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people between 15 to 19 years old.

## IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS AN ALCOHOL PROBLEM...

Get help. Abuse of alcohol ruins lives and entire communities. But it doesn’t have to be this way. If you or a friend has a problem with alcohol, it can be overcome. See the back of this pamphlet for organizations that are ready to help.