



ALCOHOL AND THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

DON'T DROWN YOUR POTENTIAL

DRINKING AND A BRIGHT FUTURE DON'T MIX.

The teen brain undergoes many complex changes, which continue into a person's mid-20s. As a result, teenagers develop the cognitive, emotional, and social skills they need to survive and thrive. Unfortunately, these rapid changes may also increase the adolescent brain's vulnerability to alcohol exposure.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Alcohol misuse during the teen years has been linked to a reduction in the size of these brain regions:

Frontal lobe: Involved in planning and decision-making

Hippocampus: Involved in learning and memory

Amygdala: Fear-sensing

Corpus callosum: Communication between the two sides of the brain

WHO'S AT RISK?

All young people are more vulnerable than adults to both the short-term and long-term negative effects of alcohol. This is because experiences like drinking can cause bigger changes in their still-developing brain. Teens who have experienced childhood trauma may be more likely to engage in binge drinking during adolescence.





**13.2
MILLION
PEOPLE
AGED 12-20
REPORT
HAVING
TRIED
ALCOHOL**

HOW TO MINIMIZE RISK

- Education about the dangers of alcohol use
- High self-esteem
- Environment that is not permissive of underage drinking
- Participation in activities
- Community involvement
- School support

HOW TO HELP

The best way to avoid the negative effects of alcohol is to not drink. Peers, family, and community all play an important role in helping teens make more responsible choices. If use is an issue, there are many places to help, including:

**National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
or www.findtreatment.gov**

**THE BRAIN DESERVES
BETTER THAN BOOZE.**