

Underage Drinking Kills

The statistics are startling and clear. By senior year, three out of every four high school students have consumed alcohol. Fifty percent of 12th graders and 20% of 8th graders have admitted to being drunk at least once.

Underage drinking is a factor in 41% of teen automobile accidents and 32% of all teen driving deaths. Under-age drinking is the number one killer of young people and is directly linked to an estimated 5,000 deaths of people under 21 each year, as well as thousands of other injuries.

Teenagers naturally go to parties; parents naturally worry about their children's safety. Some parents, in an attempt to control the situation, allow teens to hold underage drinking parties in their homes. This is called "Social Hosting" and in an increasing number of cities and states around the country, it's illegal. Most states have a social hosting law which defines the legal consequences.



What Is Social Hosting?

Social Hosting is providing and/or serving alcohol to a young person who is under the minimum age of 21. Social hosting can take place in a party-like atmosphere or by any adult providing alcohol to teenagers and their peers for them to drink. It can even extend to parents and homeowners who are not on the premises and/or did not provide the alcohol.

What's So Wrong With Social Hosting?

Hosting parties for underage drinkers sends the message to teens that it's okay to break the law. The mistaken idea is that you are providing a safe environment in which teens can drink, when actually there is no such thing as safe underage drinking.

There is no way to predict how teens will behave while drinking. Injuries, assault, rape or alcohol poisoning may occur on your property, and you can be held criminally liable.



RESOURCES

Parents - The Antidrug:
800-662-HELP
www.theantidrug.com

National Institute on Drug Abuse - Parenting Resources:
www.drugabuse.gov/parents/

Alcohol Abuse and Youth:
<http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/>
<http://www.sadd.org/>
<http://www.madd.org/>
<http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/>
<http://www.niaa.nih.gov/>

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SOCIAL HOSTING



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What's So Wrong with Underage Drinking?

The brain continues to develop from birth through the teen years and into the mid-20s. Using or abusing alcohol at a young age impairs brain growth. Underage drinking increases the chances of alcohol addiction later in life. Teenagers who drink are much more likely to be involved in other risky behaviors, including sexual activity which increases the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Teenage drinkers are more vulnerable to injury, violent crime and have impaired memory and learning skills that impact their ability to perform academically.

What are the Consequences of Social Hosting?

There are many consequences of hosting a party where underage drinking occurs.

- You may have your driver's license suspended, pay a fine, and/or serve jail time.
- Homeowner's Insurance rates can increase.
- You may be held civilly liable. Any injuries or accidents that may result could end in lawsuits.
- You could be responsible for medical bills, property damage, or have to pay damages for pain and emotional suffering.
- You may suffer from negative press in local radio, TV and newspapers.
- Someone could be seriously injured or killed under your watch.



If You're Hosting a Party...

Being a teenager should be fun. If you're hosting a party in your home, consider these tips:

- Limit the number of people invited to the party and assist your teen in making the party plan.
- Send limited, personalized invitations.
- Avoid sending out mass invitations via email, text message or the Internet.
- Include your contact information and encourage other parents to call.



- Have firm starting and ending times for the party.
- Let everyone know up front that the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs will not be tolerated.
- If a teen guest arrives drunk, or brings alcohol along, call his or her parents.
- Secure or remove from your home all dangerous items, such as alcohol and firearms.
- Notify your neighbors that a parent-supervised party is being planned.

If Your Child Attends a Party...

Review these suggestions before your teenager goes to their next party:

- Insist that your teen check in with you regularly. If they are attending a party or staying at a friend's house, call or drop by to check on them.
- Remind them that their actions have consequences and that you don't have to drink to have fun.
- Make sure you know how they are getting to and from the party.
- Verify that a responsible adult is supervising the party and know where it is being held.
- Make certain that alcohol will not be served.
- If your teen plans on leaving the party for some other destination, insist that they call you first.
- Remind them of the dangers of riding in a car driven by a person under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Tell your teen they can call you to pick them up anytime, anywhere without fear of punishment.
- Set a curfew and have serious consequences for breaking it.

If You Are Out Of Town...

- Have a strict "NO PARTY" in the house rule while you are gone.
- Ask a responsible adult to "house sit" or make arrangements with a neighbor to keep an eye on the place.
- Ask your local law enforcement to check on the house and let your teenagers know that you have made this request.

What You Can Do...

Underage drinking is never acceptable. You should do all you can to create an environment where young people steer clear of dangerous drugs and illegal situations. Here are some suggestions:

- Set a good example.
- Speak openly with your teen and let them know what your expectations are. Set clear guidelines, boundaries and consequences.
- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents. Make an effort to always know what your child is doing and with whom.
- Plan fun, alcohol-free activities with your teen and their friends and parents. Evening activities that are fun for teenagers offer alternatives to alcohol driven gatherings.
- Learn what your teen's goals and desires are and discuss how underage drinking can affect their dreams, relationships and future.

Parents and other adults have the greatest influence on the lives of young people. It is the duty of every adult to ensure that our children grow up to be happy, productive, drug-free adults.

