

## why an alcohol brochure?

Because for teens, alcohol is the drug of choice. In fact, alcohol is used by more young people than tobacco or illegal drugs.

The longer teens wait before starting to drink, the better. Nearly half of kids who begin using alcohol before age 15 will become alcohol abusers or addicted to alcohol at some point in their lives.

## adults drink in moderation

Moderate or low-risk drinking for healthy adults is defined as:

For men, two drinks per day.

For women, one drink per day.

Binge drinking (having 4 or 5+ drinks in a row) daily or on weekends causes brain damage, increases risk of breast cancer and other diseases, and leads to violence.

## is my teen at risk?

Use this checklist to see if your teen is at high-risk for a drinking problem and ways to lessen that risk.

### high-risk checklist

*Smoking before age 18.*

Teens who smoke are nine times more likely to drink heavily than teens who don't. If your teen smokes, enroll them in stop smoking classes.

*Family history*

Are there blood relatives in your family who are problem drinkers or drug users? Trace your family history and share the results with your kids: 1/3 of kids with an addicted parent inherit the disease. Tell at risk kids to avoid addiction by not using alcohol or other addictive drugs.

*ADD or ADHD*

Childhood ADD/ADHD is as important for the risk of addiction as having a family history. The only solution for a teen with ADD/ADHD is not to drink or use other addictive drugs.



alertlabs.org  
info@alertlabs.org  
616.560.5247

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# 21 reasons

teens and alcohol don't mix

making sobriety attractive project

## teens and alcohol don't mix

In the US, 70% of teens don't drink. But those that do, drink for one purpose: to get drunk.

Some believe teenage drinking is part of growing up, but the teen years are one of the worst possible times to use alcohol because the brain is still actively developing and won't finish until the mid-20's.

Alcohol is the #1 date rape drug in America and teen girls drink more than teen boys.



“Most teens who don't drink say they abstain because they don't want to disappoint their parents.”

Dr. Nancy L. Harper  
Director of ALERT Labs  
Dean of Social Sciences &  
Professor of Communication (ret.)

## talk to them

Your child looks to you for guidance and support when making life decisions - including the decision not to use alcohol. 50% of kids, whose parents make it clear that they disapprove, choose NOT to drink (and don't use illicit drugs).

Isn't it a little early to be concerned about drinking? Not at all. Even if your child is not yet drinking alcohol, he or she may be receiving pressure to drink.

Act now. Tell him or her that you don't approve of teens drinking. If you don't, you risk giving them the impression that you are ok with it.

## risks of teen drinking

Compared to their peers, teen drinkers are:

- Twice as likely to have many sexual partners
- 5 times more likely to attempt suicide
- 3 times more likely to get into trouble at school
- 4.5 times more likely to get into serious fights
- 3 times more likely to be hospitalized with a mental health problem and suffer depression and anxiety.

## benefits of teens not drinking

Teens who don't drink usually:

- Earn good grades and do well in college
- Drink normally as adults
- Avoid unplanned and unsafe sex
- Set and meet life goals
- Don't get addicted to alcohol and other drugs.

## “safe” drinking

Adults are asked to drink moderately. Is there a “safe” level of alcohol use for those under 21?

No. Even one drink damages the area of the teen brain that handles memory, learning, math and judgment.

One drink for a teen is the same as two drinks for an adult. This is because the adult brain has finished developing.

## alcohol is the #1 killer of persons aged 14 - 24

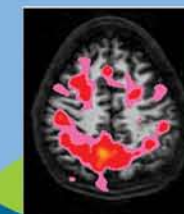
In the US, alcohol is the common factor in the four leading causes of death among persons aged 14 to 24:

1. **Car crashes** - the rate of fatal car crashes for alcohol-involved drivers between 16-20 years old is more than twice the rate for drivers 21 and older.
2. **Accidental injuries** - falls, pedestrian injuries, swimming and boating deaths.
3. **Violence** - In 2004, 65% of all ER visits were related to alcohol or other drug use.
4. **Suicide** - Alcohol use makes depression, anxiety and stress worse, and all contribute to suicide. In one study, 37% of 8th grade females who drank heavily reported attempting suicide, compared with 11% who did not drink.

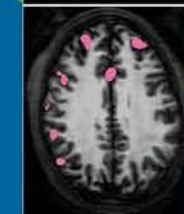
Alcohol kills 6.5 times more young people than all other illegal drugs combined.

## brain scans

The images below show how much more active (red area) a teen non-drinker's brain is than a drinker's brain.



*Brain of a 15-year-old non-drinker*



*Brain of a 15-year-old drinker*