



Real Facts

Consequences

- Every year in the United States, approximately 5,000 young people under age 21 die as a result of underage drinking.
- Research shows that people who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.
- In 2010, more than 180,000 people under the age of 21 went to an emergency room for injuries linked to alcohol.
- Drinking can lead to poor decisions about engaging in risky behavior, including drinking and driving, sexual activity (such as unprotected sex), and aggressive or violent behavior.

Community

- Research shows that teens are much more likely to delay drinking when they feel they have a close, supportive tie with a parent or guardian.
- Parents matter. Research shows that children whose parents are actively involved in their lives are less likely to drink alcohol.
- If you think that all teens are drinking, think again. Research shows that more than 60 percent of youth ages 12 to 20 have not had a drink in the past month.

Consumption

- Although underage drinking is illegal, people ages 12 to 20 years drink 11 percent of all alcohol consumed in the United States!
- By age 15, more than 50 percent of teens have had at least one drink. By age 18, more than 70 percent of teens have had at least one drink.
- Many youth have easy access to alcohol. A recent study shows that more than 93 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 14 who drank alcohol in the past month got it for free. In many cases, adolescents have access to alcohol through family members or find it at home.
- Young people consume more than 90 percent of their alcohol by binge drinking (consuming many drinks on one occasion). Binge drinking can lead to depression and isolation.
- More adolescents use alcohol than cigarettes or marijuana.

Sources:

- The NYC Community Health Profile Youth Development Survey; [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\)](#); [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#); [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Alcohol Fact Sheet](#); [Office of the Surgeon General Underage Drinking Call to Action](#); [OASAS Youth Development Survey](#)