

Alcohol and Teens

General Information

Alcohol is the most frequently abused drug by young people, even though it is illegal to buy or possess under the age of 21. The average age when youth first try alcohol is 11 years old for boys and 13 for girls. The average age at which Americans begin drinking regularly is 15.9 years old.

(<http://www.focusas.com/Alcohol.html>)

Adolescents who begin drinking before the age of 15, are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin at age 21, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Parents, who spoke about the affects of alcohol to their children, were less likely to have their children start drinking.

Why do Teenagers Drink?

Their families drink, it is portrayed as cool by advertisers, peer drinking/peer acceptance, may relax them, experimentation, lack of parental support and communication. These are only a few reasons why a teen may drink, every child is different.

Warning Signs if your Teen is using Alcohol:

Secretive behaviors, change in personality, drop in grades, getting new friends that they may not want to introduce to their parents, change in activities (drop extracurricular activities), finding of alcohol- even if claim that it is their "friends".

If under the influence look for these signs:

Slurred speech, difficulty expressing a clear thought, can't walk straight, unable to focus on your eyes, red eyes or flushed face, morning headaches or nausea, weakness, or sweatiness, alcohol odor on breath or sweat.

What can a Parent do?

- ❖ Parents can set a positive role model for drinking responsibly:
Display appropriate drinking behaviors
- ❖ Talk to your child about the affects of drinking alcohol
- ❖ Be aware of signs of alcohol abuse and take action if you feel your child is at risk for alcohol abuse
- ❖ Be consistent with discipline related to alcohol use (let the child know the rules related to alcohol use and follow through) and all other areas

- ❖ Know your child's friends and their parents views on alcohol use, teach your child to deal with peer pressure, educate yourself as to the current trends.
- ❖ Listen to your child-do not preach

If you feel your child has a problem with alcohol:

Contact your physician or the 800 numbers listed below for a treatment referral and more information.

RESOURCES:

The National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service:
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information:
1-800-729-6686

Office of National Drug Control Policy
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>

MADD, Inc.
<http://www.madd.org>

SADD, Inc., 1-877-SADD-INC
<http://www.sadd.org>

Tips for Teens: The truth about alcohol
<http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov>

Drug Education
<http://www.freevibe.com>

Alcoholics Anonymous
<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org>

BOOKS:

Letters to Judy: What Your Kids Wish They Could Tell You. Blume, J.

How to Talk to Teens about Really Important Things. Schaefer, C. E., & DiGeronimo, T. F.

You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20. Steinberg, L., & Levine, A.

Learning About Drinking. Houghton, E., & Roche, A.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse: The Authoritative Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Counselors. Thomasmilhorn, H., Jr., M.D., Ph. D.