

DANGERS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING



THE FACTS

- Underage drinking is a serious public health problem in the United States.
- Alcohol is the most widely used substance among America's youth and can cause them health and safety risks.
- The consequences of underage drinking can affect everyone—regardless of age or drinking status.
- Either directly or indirectly, we all feel the effects of aggressive behavior, property damage, injuries, violence, and deaths that can result from underage drinking. This is not simply a problem for some families—it is a nationwide concern.
- Underage drinking poses a range of risks and negative consequences. It is dangerous because it: causes many deaths, injuries, impairs judgement, increases the risk of physical and sexual assault, increases alcohol problems later in life, and interferes with brain development.

TAKE ACTION

- Teens should avoid parties where there will be drinking.
- Never get into a car with someone who has been drinking. Encourage them to find a safe ride home.
- If someone you know is unresponsive from drinking too much alcohol, call 911.
- If someone is pressuring you to try alcohol or other drugs, find help. Talk to someone you trust.

- If you think that someone you know has a drinking problem, encourage them to get help. A counselor meeting can help them find a way to quit. Some signs to look for include:
 - Drinking frequently or lying about how much they've had to drink.
 - Not remembering things that happened while drinking; blacking out.
 - Depression

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Parents can prevent kids from drinking by being actively involved in their children's lives.
- Make sure your kids know your opinion about underage drinking. Set clear rules and stick to them.
- Know your children's friends and their parents. Stay involved and make sure you are comfortable with the activities your kids are involved in and who they spend their time with.
- Do not let your children have access to alcohol at home; if you decide to keep it around, keep it locked up.
- Watch for signs that your child is drinking, these signs may include:
 - Mood swings or change in attitude.
 - Social withdrawal at home and school.
 - Disregarding rules.
 - Lying or being secretive.
 - Change in friends or frequent activities (hobbies/extracurricular)
 - If your child shows signs of drinking, get involved, ask questions, and find a way to help.