

Alcohol Facts

- **Alcohol affects your self-control.** Alcohol depresses your central nervous system, lowers your inhibitions, and impairs your judgment. Drinking can lead to risky behaviors, including having unprotected sex. This may expose you to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases or cause unwanted pregnancy.
- **Alcohol can kill you.** Drinking large amounts of alcohol can lead to coma or even death. Also, in 2004, 36 percent of traffic deaths of 16- to 20-year-olds were alcohol-related. That equates to the deaths of 2,115 people in this age group alone.
- **Look around you.** Most teens aren't drinking alcohol. According to a national 2006 study, 65% of 12th graders and 83% of 8th graders chose **NOT** to drink in the past 30 days
- Prolonged, heavy use of alcohol can lead to **addiction** (alcoholism). Sudden cessation of long term, extensive alcohol intake is likely to produce withdrawal symptoms, including severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and convulsions.
- **More than 100,000** U.S. deaths are caused by excessive alcohol consumption each year. Direct and indirect causes of death include drunk driving, cirrhosis of the liver, falls, cancer, and stroke.
- Underage drinking costs the United States more than \$58 billion every year — enough to buy every public school student a state-of-the-art computer.
- Alcohol kills 6½ times more youth than all other illicit drugs combined.
- Teens' brains and bodies are still developing; alcohol use can cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism.⁵ People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.
- Alcohol is a factor in the four leading causes of death among persons ages 10 to 24: (1) motor-vehicle crashes, (2) unintentional injuries, (3) homicide, and (4) suicide.

- Research indicates that the human brain continues to develop into a person's early 20's, and that exposure of the developing brain to alcohol may have long-lasting effects on intellectual capabilities and may increase the likelihood of alcohol addiction.
- Teens who drink alcohol are more likely than nondrinkers to smoke marijuana, use inhalants, or carry a weapon.
- In recent surveys of high school students, 93 percent of 12th-graders and 64 percent of 8th-graders reported that alcohol is “fairly” or “very” easy to get.