

INFORMATION FROM TEENLINE

<http://teenlineonline.org>

When used in large amounts, over a long period of time, or in the wrong combination, alcohol or drugs can kill. Effects depend on the user's body size and personality. Drugs are VERY unpredictable and their effects on the body differ from person to person. Some of the dangers of experimenting with drugs and/or alcohol are:

- Overdose
- Physical illness
- Accidents
- Use of impure or unknown drugs
- Addiction
- Problems with family, work, school, etc.
- Trouble with the law
- AIDS (if needles are shared)
- Death

ALCOHOL is a liquid drug. It is the most abused drug in the United States in all age groups. Alcohol is a depressant that slows a person's heart rate and breathing and affects the part of the brain which controls mood and emotion.

ALCOHOL FACTS

- Games such as "chugging" (drinking large amount of alcohol in a short time) can kill you.
- Mixing alcohol with downers or other drugs is extremely dangerous. Wrong combinations can kill you.
- Drinking or using any drugs during pregnancy is extremely dangerous to the unborn baby.
- Drinking and driving can kill you and/or others.

CHECKLIST FOR ALCOHOL OR DRUG USE

This list of questions can help you determine if your use or someone else's use of alcohol and/or drugs is a problem.

DO YOU OR DOES SOMEONE YOU KNOW:

- Drink/do drugs because of problems?
- Drink/do drugs when mad at others?
- Find grades or work habits are starting to slip?
- Try to drink/do drugs less and fail?
- Drink/do drugs even when not meaning to?
- Drink/do drugs in the morning? Before school/work?
- Have blackouts (can't remember periods of time)?
- Lie about drinking/drug use?
- Ever get in trouble because of drinking/drug use?
- Think it's cool to get drunk or high?

If you answered "yes" to ANY of these questions, ASK FOR HELP!

Drugs & Alcohol Resources

Al-Anon Family Groups 888-425-2666

Website: www.al-anon.org

Los Angeles (888) 684-6444

Spanish (24-hour) (562) 948-2190

Alcohol Drug Helpline (24-hour) (800) 821-4357

Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group - 800-344-2666

Alateen - 888-684-6444

Website: www.al-anon.alateen.org

(English) (213) 387-3158 / M-F 9am-5pm call (818) 760-7122 - (Spanish) (562) 948-2190

Alcoholicos Anonimos (Spanish) - 323-735-2089

INFORMATION FROM LAUSD SCHOOL SAFETY DEPARTMENT

http://schoolsafety.lausd.net/substance_abuse/alcohol

Alcohol

Slang--Booze, Sauce, Brews, Brewskis, Hooch, Hard Stuff, Juice

Get the Facts...

Alcohol affects your brain. Drinking alcohol leads to a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts.

Alcohol affects your body. Alcohol can damage every organ in your body. It is absorbed directly into your bloodstream and can increase your risk for a variety of life-threatening diseases, including cancer.

Alcohol affects your self-control. Alcohol depresses your central nervous system, lowers your inhibitions, and impairs your judgment. Drinking can lead to risky behaviors, such as driving when you shouldn't, or having unprotected sex.

Alcohol can kill you. Drinking large amounts of alcohol at one time or very rapidly can cause alcohol poisoning, which can lead to coma or even death. Driving and drinking also can be deadly. In 2003, 31 percent of drivers age 15 to 20 who died in traffic accidents had been drinking alcohol.¹

Alcohol can hurt you--even if you're not the one drinking. If you're around people who are drinking, you have an increased risk of being seriously injured, involved in car crashes, or affected by violence. At the very least, you may have to deal with people who are sick, out of control, or unable to take care of themselves.

Alcohol is a depressant. Which means it slows the function of the central nervous system. Alcohol actually blocks some of the messages trying to get to the brain. This alters a person's perceptions, emotions, movement, vision, and hearing.

In very small amounts, alcohol can help a person feel more relaxed or less anxious. More alcohol causes greater changes in the brain, resulting in intoxication. People who have too much alcohol may stagger, lose their coordination, and experience slurred speech. They will probably be confused and disoriented. Depending on the person, intoxication can affect one's personality, make someone very friendly and talkative or very aggressive and angry. Reaction times are slowed dramatically — which is why people are told not to drink and drive. People who are intoxicated may think they're moving properly when they're not. They may act totally out of character.

When large amounts of alcohol are consumed in a short period of time, alcohol poisoning can result. Alcohol poisoning is exactly what it sounds like — the body has become poisoned by large amounts of alcohol. Violent vomiting is usually the first symptom of alcohol poisoning. Extreme sleepiness, unconsciousness, difficulty breathing, dangerously low blood sugar, seizures, and even death may result.

Before You Risk It...

Know the law. It is illegal to buy or possess alcohol if you are under age 21.

Get the facts. One drink can make you fail a breath test. In some States, people under age 21 can lose their driver's license, be subject to a heavy fine, or have their car permanently taken away.

Stay informed. "Binge" drinking means having five or more drinks on one occasion. Studies show that more than 35 percent of adults with an alcohol problem developed symptoms--such as binge drinking--by age 19.²

Know the risks. Alcohol is a drug. Mixing it with any other drug can be extremely dangerous. Alcohol and acetaminophen--a common ingredient in OTC pain and fever reducers--can damage your liver. Alcohol mixed with other drugs can cause nausea, vomiting, fainting, heart problems, and difficulty breathing.³ Mixing alcohol and drugs also can lead to coma and death.

Keep your edge. Alcohol is a depressant, or downer, because it reduces brain activity. If you are depressed before you start drinking, alcohol can make you feel worse.

Look around you. Most teens aren't drinking alcohol. Research shows that 71 percent of people 12-20 haven't had a drink in the past month.⁴

Why Do Teens Drink?

Experimentation with alcohol during the teen years is common. Some reasons that teens use alcohol and other drugs:

- curiosity
- to feel good, reduce stress, and relax
- to fit in
- to feel older

From a very young age, kids see advertising messages showing beautiful people enjoying life — and alcohol. And because many parents and other adults use alcohol socially — having beer or wine with dinner, for example — alcohol seems harmless to many teens.

Why Shouldn't I Drink?

Although it's illegal to buy alcohol in the United States until the age of 21, most teens can get access to it. It's therefore up to you to make a decision about drinking. In addition to the possibility of becoming addicted, there are some downsides to drinking:

The punishment is severe. Teens who drink put themselves at risk for obvious problems with the law (it's illegal; you can get arrested). Teens who drink are also more likely to get into fights and commit crimes than those who don't.

People who drink regularly also often have problems with school. Drinking can damage a student's ability to study well and get decent grades, as well as affect sports performance (the coordination thing).

You can look really stupid. The impression is that drinking is cool, but the nervous system changes that come from drinking alcohol can make people do stupid or embarrassing things. Drinking also gives people bad breath, and no one enjoys a hangover.

Alcohol puts your health at risk. Teens who drink are more likely to be sexually active and to have unsafe, unprotected sex. Resulting pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases can change — or even end — lives. The risk of injuring yourself, maybe even fatally, is higher when you're under the influence, too. One half of all drowning deaths among teen guys are related to alcohol use. Use of alcohol greatly increases the chance that a teen will be involved in a car crash, homicide, or suicide.

Teen drinkers are more likely to get fat or have health problems, too. One study by the University of Washington found that people who regularly had five or more drinks in a row starting at age 13 were much more likely to be overweight or have high blood pressure by age 24 than their nondrinking peers. People who continue drinking heavily well into adulthood risk damaging their organs, such as the liver, heart, and brain.

How Can I Avoid Drinking?

If all your friends drink and you don't want to, it can be hard to say "no, thanks." No one wants to risk feeling rejected or left out. Different strategies for turning down alcohol work for different people. Some people find it helps to say no without giving an explanation, while others think offering their reasons works better ("I'm not into drinking," "I have a game tomorrow," or "my uncle died from drinking," for example).

If saying no to alcohol makes you feel uncomfortable in front of people you know, blame your parents or another adult for your refusal. Saying, "My parents are coming to pick me up soon," "I already got in major trouble for drinking once, I can't do it again," or "my coach would kill me," can make saying no a bit easier for some.

If you're going to a party and you know there will be alcohol, plan your strategy in advance. You and a friend can develop a signal for when it's time to leave, for example. You can also make sure that you have plans to do something besides just hanging out in someone's basement drinking beer all night. Plan a trip to the movies, the mall, a concert, or a sports event. You might also organize your friends into a volleyball, bowling, or softball team — any activity that gets you moving.

Girls or guys who have strong self-esteem are less likely to become problem drinkers than people with low self-esteem.

Knowing the Signs...

How can you tell if a friend has a drinking problem? Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may have a problem with alcohol:

- Getting drunk on a regular basis
- Lying about how much alcohol he or she is using
- Believing that alcohol is necessary to have fun
- Having frequent hangovers
- Feeling run-down, depressed, or even suicidal
- Having "blackouts"--forgetting what he or she did while drinking

What can you do to help someone who has a drinking problem? Be a real friend. You might even save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686.

Where Can I Get Help?

If you think you have a drinking problem, get help as soon as possible. The best approach is to talk to an adult you trust. If you can't approach your parents, talk to your doctor, school counselor, clergy member, aunt, or uncle. It can be hard for some people to talk to adults about these issues, but a supportive person in a position to help can refer students to a drug and alcohol counselor for evaluation and treatment.

In some states, this treatment is completely confidential. After assessing a teen's problem, a counselor may recommend a brief stay in rehab or outpatient treatment. These treatment centers help a person gradually overcome the physical and psychological dependence on alcohol.

Q&A

Q. Aren't beer and wine "safer" than liquor?

A. No. One 12-ounce bottle of beer or a 5-ounce glass of wine (about a half-cup) has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor. Alcohol can make you drunk and cause you problems no matter how you consume it.

Q. Why can't teens drink if their parents can?

A. 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 20.⁶

Q. How can I say no to alcohol? I'm afraid I won't fit in.

A. It's easier to refuse than you think. Try: "No thanks," "I don't drink," or "I'm not interested." Remember that the majority of teens don't drink alcohol. You're in good company when you're one of them.

¹Traffic Safety Facts 2003 Data: Young Drivers, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. U.S. Department of Transportation, 2004.

²Prevention Alert: The Binge Drinking Epidemic. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2002.

³Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicines. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2003.

⁴2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005.

⁵Underage Drinking: A Major Public Health Challenge. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2003.

⁶The NSDUH Report: Alcohol Dependence or Abuse and Age at First Use. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2004.

INFORMATION FROM THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A DRUG FREE AMERICA

<http://www.drugfree.org/>

TIPS FOR RAISING DRUG-FREE TEENS

As a parent or caregiver, you have a tremendous influence on your child's life. Your constant and caring involvement can help inspire your child to make healthy, drug-free choices.

But talking to your kids about the effects of drugs is a lot harder than it used to be.

The Partnership's latest research shows that many teens are more knowledgeable than their parents are about drugs – especially about the abuse of emerging drugs, such as [methamphetamine](#) and the abuse of both prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.

Kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to half as likely as their peers to try or use drugs. So by talking to your kids about the dangers of drug use, you can help keep them drug free.

Teachable Moments

Talking with your child about drugs isn't a formal, one-time-only conversation. You can steer conversational topics to why drugs are harmful or use everyday events to start a conversation about them. Take advantage of blocks of time, such as before school, on the way to practice or after dinner to discuss drugs and to voice your "no-use" expectation. Here are some tips to get it started:

** Talk about a recent drug- or alcohol-related incident in your community or family.*

** If you and your child see a group of kids drinking or smoking, use the moment to talk about the negative effects of alcohol and tobacco.*

Show Kids You Care

It may seem simple, but one of the best ways to keep your kids drug-free is to show them you care. Simple gestures such as an unexpected hug, saying I love you every day and being supported of your child can help them to become a confident person. Here are **5 ways to show you care**:

- 1. Reinforce your love -- say the words I love you*
- 2. Be careful not to criticize; describe a better way.*
- 3. Remember that children often reflect what they have or have not been taught.*
- 4. Teach the principles of "why," not just "what" to do or not to do.*
- 5. Listen to them, a lot. Avoid interrupting. Give them your undivided attention.*

Tips for Talking: Approach Your Teen About Their Possible Alcohol or Drug Use

Mood swings and unpredictable behavior are sometimes evidence of teenage "growing pains," but can also point to use of drugs or alcohol. Be aware of any unexplained changes and know the potential warning signs. Try talking to your teen -- the earlier you intervene, the better chance your child has to regain his health and return to a drug-free life. Try these conversation starters:

** "I think you've got a problem and I need to talk with you about it."*

** "You've scared me and broke our rules. Here's how we're going to help you."*

** "Do you want to tell me what's going on?"*

Know What Drugs Kids Face Today

While you may be aware of the types of drugs that were around when you were a teenager, there is a new array of substances that kids today may misuse to get high. These include household products and over-the-counter and prescription medication that can be found in your own home. *The more informed you are, the more your kids will listen to you.*

Visit our [Drug Guide](#) to learn about various drugs, their slang terms and their effects.

Stay Informed

Research shows an alarming number of teenagers are intentionally abusing a variety of Rx and OTC medications to get high. Approximately one in five teenagers has abused a prescription medicine to get high, and one in 10 has abused cough medicine. These medications have become increasingly more accessible to teens, in some cases directly via the internet, and generally are more prevalent in their teen's lives than parents realize.

What is Alcohol?

Alcohol is a depressant

How is it used?

Alcohol is drunk. Types include beer, wine, and liquor.

What are its short-term effects?

When a person drinks alcohol, the alcohol is absorbed by the stomach, enters the bloodstream, and goes to all the tissues. The effects of alcohol are dependent on a variety of factors, including a person's size, weight, age, and sex, as well as the amount of food and alcohol consumed. The disinhibiting effect of alcohol is one of the main reasons it is used in so many social situations. Other effects of moderate alcohol intake include dizziness and talkativeness; the immediate effects of a larger amount of alcohol include slurred speech, disturbed sleep, nausea, and vomiting. Alcohol, even at low doses, significantly impairs the judgment and coordination required to drive a car safely. Low to moderate doses of alcohol can also increase the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts, including domestic violence and child abuse. Hangovers are another possible effect after large amounts of alcohol are consumed; a hangover consists of headache, nausea, thirst, dizziness, and fatigue.

What are its long-term effects?

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. Long-term effects of consuming large quantities of alcohol, especially when combined with poor nutrition, can lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the brain and liver. In addition, mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome. These infants may suffer from mental retardation and other irreversible physical abnormalities. In addition, research indicates that children of alcoholic parents are at greater risk than other children of becoming alcoholics.

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Think you know the facts about alcohol abuse? If you consume alcoholic beverages, it's important to know whether your drinking patterns are safe, risky or harmful. If you haven't done so already