

Youth and Alcohol Facts

Traffic crashes

Approximately 1/3 of all deaths among 15- to 24-year-olds are from traffic crashes, and in 22% of fatal crashes involving young drivers, the young driver was drinking (NSC, 2005; NHTSA, 2005).

An estimated 24,000 traffic fatalities have been prevented since 1975 due to minimum drinking age laws (NHTSA, 2005).

Suicide

Up to 38% of adolescent and adult suicide victims (attempted and completed) test positive for alcohol (Bennett & Collins, 2000; Smith et al., 1999).

Rape and sexual assault

General alcohol use and binge drinking are shown to be associated with sexual and physical assault victimization among adolescent girls (Buzy et al., 2004; Champion et al., 2004)

Alcohol use -- by the victim, the perpetrator or both -- has been implicated at least half of rapes of college women (Abbey, 2002).

Alcohol availability

Alcohol is readily available to underage youth from both commercial sources (liquor stores, convenience stores) and social sources (parties, friends, parents); youthful buyers are able to buy alcohol in approximately 30-50% of purchase attempts (Dent et al., 2005; Freisthler et al., 2003; Kann et al., 2000)

Drowning

Alcohol has been linked to up to 30-70% of drownings among adults and adolescents (Driscoll et al., 2004).

Risky sexual behavior

Teens who drink alcohol, particularly those who binge drink, are more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior (Dunn et al., 2003).

A national survey of teens showed that alcohol use was strongly associated with having numerous sexual partners (Valois et al., 1999).

College

57% of underage college drinkers report that they paid less than one dollar for a drink, got it free, or paid a set price for an unlimited number of drinks (Wechsler et al., 2000).

Approximately one-third of college drinkers report having at least once forgotten where they were or what they did due to drinking (Wechsler et al, 2000).

High school

One-third of high school students nationwide reported that at least once in the last month they rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol (Kann et al, 2000).

Junior high and high school students who drank alcohol in early adolescence were more likely to have academic and employment problems (Ellickson et al., 2003).

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