

UNDERAGE DRINKING:
Know the Facts,
Know the Risks

UNDERAGE DRINKING: KNOW THE FACTS, KNOW THE RISKS

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Teacher's Resource Book

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UNDERAGE DRINKING: KNOW THE FACTS, KNOW THE RISKS

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Youth is often associated with having fun and taking risks. In many ways, alcohol—as portrayed in ads, television shows and movies—also evokes the same associations. Thus, it’s no surprise that underage drinking is still viewed as one of the most common forms of teenage behaviors. As a matter of fact, many adults and young people continue to assume that drinking is just a normal “rite of passage” that all adolescents experience at some point. Educators face a real challenge when trying to inform young people about the realities of drinking. Most teens have “heard it all” and are familiar with the facts of underage drinking and its effects on the body—yet young people are still drinking alcohol in record numbers. This is especially true of binge drinking, which is all-too-common among those teens that choose to drink.

New research also shows that alcohol can do serious and immediate harm to a teenager’s brain. In fact, adolescents who drink face an even higher risk of brain impairment than their adult counterparts. Alcohol may cause a decrease in the ability to learn new information, form memories and perform cognitive functions. Early drinking may also cause the brain to become more vulnerable to addiction. New research indicates that young people who begin drinking alcohol before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence at some time in their lives than those who have their first drink at age 21 or older. Chemical changes caused by alcohol can actually “hardwire” a teen’s brain for addiction—not just addiction to alcohol, but to other drugs as well.

Every year, five times as many teens die from alcohol overdose as from any other drug, legal or illegal. Dying from alcohol overdose is just the beginning of the risks. More than 10,000 young people between 16 and 24 die from alcohol-related traffic crashes each year. In addition, studies suggest that young people who binge drink are twice as likely to die from accidental injuries as non-bingers. Bingers are also more likely to be involved in acquaintance rape, suicide and unsafe sex leading to pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection.

The most common reason that teens drink alcohol is simple: to get drunk fast. This destructive form of alcohol consumption has become commonplace—not just on college campuses, but at high school parties and even among middle school students. Most of these young drinkers have little knowledge of how this behavior can jeopardize their safety, their futures and even their lives.

With that in mind, we have created *Underage Drinking: Know the Facts, Know the Risks*. The video, along with this Teacher’s Resource Book, was developed to help students understand the true face of underage drinking and how it applies to their own lives. Each activity provides an opportunity for further learning and discussion. All students are encouraged to explore their feelings about alcohol’s place in society, as well as the possible effects that drinking could have on their lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After watching the video *Underage Drinking: Know the Facts, Know the Risks* and participating in the class activities included in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- recognize the legal, physical, and emotional risks of underage drinking
- understand new research which establishes a proven link between underage drinking and brain impairment
- improve decision-making skills about alcohol-related situations
- understand and discuss the risks of binge drinking—including alcohol poisoning, acquaintance rape and driving impairment
- discuss how alcohol can contribute to car crashes or violent crimes
- explore the ways that movies, television and advertising influence young people to drink
- identify alcohol-related terms such as binge drinking, BAC and alcohol poisoning
- better understand the damage alcohol can cause to each system of the body
- learn how use their knowledge about alcohol's dangers to make healthy choices concerning alcohol
- recognize and correct common misconceptions and myths involving underage drinking
- understand that alcohol is not necessary in order to have a fun, fulfilling teenage life

As the program opens, we see a young person on a hospital life-support system. A voice explains how alcohol poisoning forces the body to try desperately to adapt to large levels of alcohol by “literally shutting down.” Another person asks young people to imagine what it would be like to wake up in a hospital, disoriented and vomiting. A physician complains that he is tired of treating “dangerously drunk teens.” A district attorney, speaking in a courtroom, explains that underage drinking leads to homicides, vehicular accidents, rapes and violent crimes. “We’ve seen so many [teen] defendants in tears,” she explains, “wishing they could turn back time.”

Next, several teens describe their first experiences with alcohol. Robert Gross, a recovering alcoholic, tells viewers that he began drinking at age 13. For the next seven or eight years, he was in a state of serious addiction. During that time, he says now, “I missed my whole life.” Gary Najarian, Project Director of the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking, explains that Robert is very typical. “Nationally,” explains Mr. Najarian, “the average age to begin drinking is 13.” The teens say that many young people choose to drink because they want to grow up fast and because alcohol use is so ingrained in daily American life. Mr. Najarian explains that for many teens, “being able to use alcohol means being an adult.”

Sergeant C. Leon Pierce, Jr., from the Department of Public Safety, Connecticut State Police, appears on-screen to discuss the prevalence of alcohol ads on television and at sporting events. Dr. Christopher Michos, Attending Physician of the Waterbury Hospital Emergency Department in Connecticut, refers to teen-oriented television shows that feature alcohol. These shows rarely include the side effects of drinking, which Dr. Michos sees all the time. “The trends are getting scarier,” he says. “The kids are getting younger.” Mr. Najarian lists the four leading killers of young people: car crashes, suicide, homicide and drowning. The common thread among all four, he points out, is alcohol. Robert Gross and Dr. Michos then describe another serious threat to young drinkers—alcohol poisoning.

A section entitled **After the Hangover** describes how alcohol affects the developing brains of young people. Robert affirms that he’s certain he has slowed down mentally because of drinking alcohol at such a young age. The teens say that most young people are only concerned with the immediate health effects, but rarely stop to consider that mental damage can be permanent. Dr. Michos explains that the brain does not stop developing fully until age 20. Mr. Najarian adds that recent studies have shown that the brains of younger drinkers are actually smaller than the brains of teens who don’t drink. This can lead to memory problems, depression, learning disabilities and other serious consequences.

What’s Next? discusses alcohol as a gateway drug. “Alcohol opened the gates for me,” says Robert. “I had been drinking for two years before doing other drugs. People don’t go right to shooting heroin. Most start with alcohol.” The teens agree, explaining that alcohol can make you feel relaxed and more open to trying other drugs. Mr. Najarian defines “experimentation” as having used alcohol without facing any of the consequences. This

is a dangerous time when teens are simply playing a game of chance. Often, fate catches up with teen drinkers when they least expect it.

Sergeant Pierce describes an alcohol-related car crash that killed three teens. “I never want to experience that again,” he says. Lynn Kevalis begins to tell the story of an accident that left three young people dead, including her son John. The accident also left her son Marty with an amputated leg. “As a parent,” she says, “you go on just to go on.” Even those who escape death or permanent injury can face serious jail time, according to the Honorable Jean Pirro, District Attorney for Westchester County, New York. She tells viewers about strict underage drinking laws that are being enforced more tightly than ever. She describes a variety of charges, including illegal purchase, illegal possession, DWI, manslaughter and use of a false ID. These charges can lead to real jail time, loss of license and a felony record for ten years or even longer. As Sergeant Pierce explains, being a convicted felon can have a disastrous impact on a young person’s application for college, financial aid and jobs. The teens explain that most young people are more worried about getting into trouble with their parents, rarely thinking of other serious consequences.

The teens stress how important it is for parents to talk with young people about the dangers of drinking. Allowing teens to drink at home is not a great solution, they say, because it gives you the message that drinking is okay. Mr. Najarian says that some parents are giving kids the mistaken message that underage drinking is acceptable if you control it. The truth is, no one can control all the consequences of underage drinking. Even when driving is not involved, other risks such as alcohol poisoning, drug use and sexual assault are very real. Above all, underage drinking is a crime.

Parents: Set the Example further encourages parents to spend time with young people and talk to them about the risks of drinking. Mr. Najarian says that teens name their parents as the “number one influence” on their lives. What they say does matter. In fact, children who have discussed drinking with their parents are 50 percent less likely to use alcohol. Finally, the teens list many alternatives to drinking, including things that allow them to be themselves—something alcohol does not do. “Live life a little,” says Robert as the program draws to a close, “before you make a decision to drink.”

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

1. If an underage person only possesses alcohol, it is not a legal problem.
A) True
B) False
2. Teenagers' bodies are more able to handle alcohol than adults' bodies.
A) True
B) False
3. Hard liquor can make you addicted to alcohol, but not beer.
A) True
B) False
4. A false ID protects the seller and has no legal consequences for the owner.
A) True
B) False
5. Chemical changes caused by alcohol can "hardwire" a teen's brain for addiction for all kinds of other drugs, as well as alcohol.
A) True
B) False
6. Alcohol is a poison.
A) True
B) False
7. Brains of young drinkers are smaller than those of non-drinkers.
A) True
B) False
8. Being drunk is not a valid defense against charges of manslaughter, assault, or date rape.
A) True
B) False
9. As long as nobody is injured, your parents can't be legally charged with any crime if you have a party where alcohol is served to minors.
A) True
B) False
10. Teenage overdosing deaths from alcohol are five times more common than overdose deaths from any other drug.
A) True
B) False
11. Underage people can legally drink or serve alcohol in a private home for a special occasion.
A) True
B) False

Name: _____

Answer Key

- 1. B**
- 2. B**
- 3. B**
- 4. B**
- 5. A**
- 6. A**
- 7. A**
- 8. A**
- 9. B**
- 10. A**
- 11. B**

Name: _____

Research one of the topics below, and write a brief paper on your findings. You can gather information at your school or local library, as well as on the Internet. Use a *Resource Tracker* (Activity Sheet 1b) to collect information.

Alcohol and the Brain

What new discoveries have been made concerning the link between alcohol and the brain? What could be the possible effects of heavy drinking on a young person's brain? Use recent newspaper, magazine and Internet articles to support your research.

Underage Drinking and The Law

What are the current laws in your state, community and school related to underage drinking? Are there any new laws that have been passed recently or are currently under consideration at the local and state level? What difference, if any, will these laws make? What can happen to a teen caught drinking alcohol? What can happen to an adult (or teen) who provides alcohol to minors?

Binge Drinking at Special Events

What is the difference in the ways youth and adults drink? Do young people engage in "social drinking?" Do they drink to get drunk? Why do young people choose to overindulge at special events (such as proms or graduation)? Studies show that teens often indulge in "binge drinking." Find out more about binge drinking. What dangers are associated with it?

Alcohol Poisoning

How common is alcohol poisoning among young people? What are the risk factors? What are the early warning signs of alcohol poisoning? What should you do if you suspect that someone is suffering from alcohol poisoning?

Choosing Not to Drink

How common is it for a young person to choose not to drink? What causes youth to make this choice? What types of support do they get from family and friends? As part of this project, interview several teens and ask them to relate the story of their decision to remain alcohol-free. What are their reasons for steering clear of alcohol? Do they have any common personality traits? What is it like to be around other teens who do drink? Based upon your interviews, what can you conclude about teens who choose not to drink alcohol?

Teen Alcoholism

Why is alcohol addictive? What physiological craving responses does alcohol trigger? Why are some people more at risk to alcohol addiction than others? Is addiction hereditary? Investigate the chemical process of alcoholism, and explain why teens are more prone to become rapidly addicted to alcohol than adults.

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 3
ALCOHOL POLL

Conduct a poll by asking your friends and peers the questions below. Record their answers below, or on a separate sheet of paper. After polling at least five people, tally the responses and summarize your findings in a short paper. To uncover and address any incorrect responses, refer to the *Underage Drinking Risks* fact sheets.

	1	2	3	4	5
Do teens who drink suffer short-term effects, long-term effects or both?					
How many years do you have to drink before alcohol damages your brain?					
At what age does the human brain stop developing?					
How often do you drink?					
How much do you drink in one sitting?					
At what age is drinking alcohol safe?					
What are the chances of students in our community being involved in a drunk-driving crash?					
Have you ever driven a car after drinking alcohol or have you ever accepted a ride with someone who has been drinking?					
How many people do you know who can answer “yes” to the previous question?					
Has anyone you know ever been involved in an alcohol-related crash?					

Name: _____

Everyone reacts to alcohol differently. One person may become very intoxicated by an amount that barely affects someone else. The effects of alcohol depend on at least eight different factors, which are listed below.

1. Alcohol content or "proof" of the drink

Can a drinker control this factor? If so, how?

2. The volume of alcohol consumed

Can a drinker control this factor? If so, how?

3. The speed at which alcohol is consumed

Can a drinker control this factor? If so, how?

4. The drinker's mood or state of mind

Can a drinker control this factor? If so, how?

5. Food that the drinker has eaten or is eating

Can a drinker control this factor? If so, how?

6. The drinker's size and weight

Can a drinker control this factor? If so, how?

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

Divide the class into two equal groups. Using one of the debate topics below, one group must argue *yes* and the other group must argue *no*. Each side must support its position with researched facts and valid, respectful arguments.

1

Do you think there is such a thing as responsible underage drinking?

2

In more than 30 states, beer kegs can only be purchased if the buyer signs a guarantee promising that he or she will not let underage people drink from the keg. Additionally, special ID tags are installed on each keg so that the police can trace the buyer of any keg. Do you think this is a good idea, or does it infringe on personal freedom?

3

Do you think it's fair that the blood alcohol level for impaired driving is 0.08% for adults, but it is 0.00% for drivers under 21?

4

Binge drinking contributes to a number of problems on college campuses, including alcohol poisoning and acquaintance rape. Should alcohol be banned from colleges?

5

Do you think it is okay for teens to drink alcohol at a party as long as parents are present to supervise the event?

6

Should alcohol companies be held responsible if their beer and wine cooler ads are found to increase the occurrence of underage drinking? If so, what kind of penalties should apply?

7

A high number of car crashes, falls, drownings and other types of accidental deaths have been linked to alcohol. If these things happen, at least in part, because someone chooses to drink too much alcohol, are they really accidents?

8

Do the stereotypes that youth and law enforcement officials hold about each other prevent solving the underage drinking problem? If so, how?

Name: _____

Read the contract below and then answer the questions on the following page.

We view this contract as a way to open the lines of communication about drinking, drug use, and traffic safety to ensure the safety of all parties concerned. We understand that this contract does not serve as permission to drink—but rather, it is a promise to be safe.

Young Adult:

I acknowledge that the legal drinking age is 21 and have discussed with you and realize both the legal and physical risks of underage drinking, including poor decision making, alcohol poisoning and driving under the influence. I agree to contact you if I ever find myself in a position where anyone’s alcohol use impairs my safety. I further pledge to maintain safe driving practices at all times, including wearing my safety belt every trip and encouraging others to do the same.

Signature

Parent or Guardian:

Upon discussing this contract with you, I agree to provide for your safe transportation home, regardless of time or circumstances. I further vow to remain calm when dealing with your situation and discuss it with you at a time when we are both able to converse calmly about the matter.

I agree to seek safe, sober transportation home if I am ever in a situation where I have had too much to drink or a friend who is driving me has had too much to drink. Recognizing that safety belt usage is a vital defense against death and injury on the highway, I promise to wear my safety belt at all times and encourage others to do the same.

Signature

Date

Reproduced with permission of SADD “Students Against Destructive Decisions”

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

Each fact below is related to alcohol and its effects on the brain of a young drinker. Imagine that you must explain the facts to an eight year-old. Rewrite each fact using easy-to-understand language. You may want to use a dictionary to define unfamiliar words.

Alcohol decreases the transmission of nerve signals. During withdrawal from intoxication, the brain attempts to recover by increasing transmission. Scientists believe that this over-stimulation of the brain causes neurons to break down inside their own membranes and die.

In a number of studies, tests show that underage drinkers perform more poorly on cognitive tests than those who abstain from alcohol.

Alcohol use by young people can adversely affect brain functions and cause the development of attention and memory deficits.

The younger a person is when he or she begins to consume alcohol regularly, the greater his or her risk is of eventual alcohol addiction or other problems with alcohol later in life.

New evidence suggests that heavy drinking can adversely affect the prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain responsible for the ability to integrate information, think abstractly and make sound decisions.

Name: _____

For this activity, YOU are the decision-maker. Read each of the scenarios below and decide how you would handle the situation if you were in charge. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1

If you could create a school policy about young people and underage drinking, what would it say? What would be the restrictions? Penalties? How would you handle those who violated the policy?

2

You and some friends are at the beach after the prom. Some of your friends are drinking beer from a small cooler. A police car pulls up and the officer tells your friends to “dump out” the alcohol onto the ground. The officer then leaves. Was the right decision made?

3

Your friend is working at a supermarket. You see him sell a couple of six-packs of beer to another school friend. Is it a big deal? What should you do? Would you act differently if you were a co-worker? If so, how?

4

You are out at an “18 and over” club with some friends. Some of your friends are over 21 and decide to buy alcohol at the bar. They offer you a drink. Would you take it? Do you think this is okay to do? Should the bar owners be held responsible if something happens to you? Should your friends be held responsible if something happens to you?

Name: _____

Even though alcohol companies deny it, they market their products heavily to young people. For instance, recent studies show that teenagers see more beer ads than adults do. That's no accident. In part, it's the result of good marketing. The alcohol companies know exactly where and how to attract the attention of young people. As a matter of fact, young people see more ads for alcohol than they do for gum, sneakers, candy or chips!

To learn more about marketing, find an ad for a product containing alcohol. You may take an ad from a magazine or videotape an ad from television. Use the following steps to present the ad to your classmates.

1. Packaging is very important. Companies want customers to recognize their products right away. As you begin your presentation, show the ad by covering the product name with a small piece of paper. Make sure the rest of the product's packaging is still visible. Ask your classmates if they can identify the product.
2. Explain how the product is shown in the ad. Is it shown with a celebrity? Is it shown with beautiful models? What are they doing? Do they look like average people?
3. If the product is shown in the ad, how does it look? Is that the way it really looks?
4. Who is the intended audience for the ad? How can you tell?
5. What information is implied by the ad? What information is left out?
6. What is the main strategy of the ad? Use the choices below to decide. Then discuss the strategy with your classmates.

Image

A product is linked to a certain group of people, with the promise that it will bring popularity, good looks, or excitement to that group.

"Join the crowd"

Ad suggests that everyone is buying it (or doing it).

Testimonial

A famous person says the product is good.

Fairy Tale

A product is shown alongside perfect, unrealistic people or settings.

Scale

Images of products are made bigger or smaller.

Product Bashing

Ad uses unpopular terms about a competitor's product.

Name: _____

The law is simple: It is illegal for people under 21 to use, buy or possess alcohol—period. Yet rumors and confusion still exist about the laws pertaining to buying or possessing alcohol. Read each misconception below about alcohol and the law. Then research local laws in your state. It may help to contact a law enforcement officer involved with alcohol and drug education. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the statements using the facts you have uncovered.

“It’s okay to drive a car if you have only had a single drink.”

“It’s okay to use someone else’s ID to get into a club.”

“If you are arrested for driving after drinking before your 18th birthday, it will stay on your juvenile record, but it won’t show up on your permanent record.”

“You cannot be held responsible for drinking if you are at home or on private property.”

“It’s okay to be in possession of alcohol if it is a part of your job.”

“As long as you have a clean record, you will not lose your license the first time you are caught driving after drinking.”

“It’s okay for passengers to have an open container of alcohol in the car, as long as the driver isn’t drinking.”

“If you’re caught using a fake ID, the worst that can happen is that it will be taken away from you.”

“As long as nobody is injured, your parents can’t be legally charged with any crime just for letting you have a party where alcohol was served to minors.”

“It’s legal to have an open container of alcohol in your car, as long as it’s locked in the trunk.”

“Some states have lower drinking ages than others.”

Name: _____

Underage drinking is often seen in movies and on television, but the picture is not always accurate. For this activity, watch a movie or television program featuring at least one character that drinks alcohol. Take notes while watching the movie or program.

1. In the space below, write a summary of the alcohol use featured in the movie or program. How many times was it shown? Which characters used it? Did the use of alcohol actually relate to the plot?

2. Do you think the portrayal of alcohol was accurate? How does it compare with real life? Explain.

3. Did the alcohol use cause any problems? If so, were the problems solved by the end of the movie or program? How?

4. How were the characters that drank alcohol portrayed? Were they positive or negative characters?

5. What was the tone of the alcohol use (funny, serious, silly)? Were the consequences of drinking alcohol addressed?

Name: _____

For each situation below, describe how you would respond. You may choose to write a response on a separate sheet of paper, or act it out as a role-play with a classmate.

1

You and a friend are watching TV in the basement on a Friday night. Your parents are upstairs. Your friend starts snooping around in your parents' bar. He opens a bottle of vodka and starts pouring it into his soda can before you can stop him. You're terrified that your parents will come downstairs any second.

2

You have decided not to drink alcohol because of your personal convictions or family rules. One afternoon, you're sitting around with some friends. One of them says, "How come you never drink?" Your other friends look at you with curiosity, waiting for an explanation.

3

At a party, you realize that you're going to miss your curfew. The person you came with is really bombed and you don't want to ride with him. Another friend offers to drive you, but he's really putting away drinks, too. He says he's fine, but you don't believe him.

4

You go to a party with some friends. You pour yourself a soda, then misplace it for a few minutes. Later, a guy you just met hands you the soda. It has more liquid in it than before. He encourages you to drink it before it gets warm. (See the *Avoiding Acquaintance Rape* fact sheet before considering a response.)

Name: _____

Teacher's Instructions:

Divide the class up randomly into four groups. Tell the groups that they must respond to the four questions below. You may want to write the four questions on the chalkboard.

You may need to circulate around and monitor the groups. Encourage your students to “brainstorm.” No idea or suggestion is wrong; the important thing is to get all their ideas on paper.

You may need to encourage the students to be more specific about their responses. Challenge their thinking and assumptions where necessary.

After students complete the brainstorming portion above, ask them to review their lists in their small groups and to collectively agree upon the “top three” items/causes, etc.

Choose a student from each group to present their findings to the class. Discuss the outcome after each presentation.

Student Questions:

1. What kind of alcohol do you drink? (Be as specific as possible. Identify brand names, most common among your peers, etc.)
2. Where do young people drink alcohol in your town? (Be specific—not just “the park,” but “in Memorial Park off Cedar Street”)
3. Why do you think that young people drink alcohol? (Be specific about the reasons.)
4. What would make young people not drink alcohol? (In addition to general examples such as “parents who disapprove,” students should focus on their own homes, school environment and community.)

FACT SHEETS

Name: _____

Alcohol is the most abused drug in the United States. It contains a drug called ethanol, a depressant that slows down brain activity, reflexes and other physical skills.

Short-Term Risks:

- Makes it harder to think clearly and make good decisions, which can lead to problems like unwanted pregnancy, STDs, or involvement in a crime.
- Changes vision, balance and coordination—all of which greatly increase the risk of an accident, such as a car crash or drowning.
- Is illegal for those under 21. Driving while under the influence of alcohol is illegal at any age. Breaking these laws can lead to heavy fines, loss of driver's license or jail time.
- Too much alcohol too quickly can lead to alcohol poisoning—blackouts, coma or death.
- Can change behavior and emotions, making a person act foolish, clumsy, angry or loud.
- Can cause painful hangover symptoms, including stomach pains, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Can cause bloodshot eyes, pimple breakouts, and bad breath.

Long-Term Risks:

- Lowered immune system and increased risk of diseases
- Cancer of the mouth and throat
- Cirrhosis of the liver, a disease that is often fatal
- Painful stomach ulcers
- Cancer of the pancreas
- Weakened heart muscles and an irregular heartbeat
- Permanent brain damage
- Kidney failure
- Weakened muscles and bones
- High blood pressure

Name: _____

UNDERAGE DRINKING RISKS

Recent medical research has shed light on what happens to the brain when a teen drinks alcohol. For instance:

- Since their brains are still developing, teens that drink heavily are more likely to significantly lower their mental abilities than adults who drink heavily.
- The part of the brain most at risk appears to be the hippocampus, a structure responsible for learning and memory. Also at risk is the prefrontal cortex, an area responsible for decision making.
- The effects on the brain can include loss of motor skills, a lessened ability to perform on tests, and a greater difficulty learning new things.
- The average size difference between the hippocampus of a teen who drinks and the brain of a healthy teen is about 10 percent smaller for a teen drinker.
- Young brains are also more vulnerable to changes that can lead to alcohol addiction. Forty percent of alcoholics began drinking before age 15, while only 10 percent began drinking at age 21 or 22.
- Alcohol decreases the transmission of nerve signals. During withdrawal from intoxication, the brain attempts to recover by increasing transmission. Scientists believe that this over-stimulation of the brain causes neurons to break down inside their own membranes and die.
- Research shows that a teen's brain is more easily damaged than an adult's brain in the areas that regulate the storage of memories.
- Alcohol can also cause emotional changes during a time when the brain is learning to deal with new and powerful feelings. That can lead to problems with friends, cause low self-esteem, and raise stress levels.
- It takes five to 10 years for an adult to become addicted to alcohol, but a young person can become addicted in just one to two years.
- It takes half as much alcohol to affect the teen brain as it does to affect the adult brain.
- Hundreds of kids under 15 are taken to emergency rooms each year for alcohol poisoning. In addition to death, alcohol poisoning can cause heart, liver and brain damage.

*Source:
The Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking*

Name: _____

UNDERAGE DRINKING RISKS

On average, young people who drink alcohol have lower grades and a higher risk of dropping out of school. Students who drink are also five times more likely to fail a grade.

About two-thirds of all young people who get arrested were drinking alcohol at the time.

It is against the law for people under 21 to use or buy alcohol.

For teens, alcohol is a major factor in date rapes, unwanted pregnancy and the contraction of sexually transmitted infections like HIV.

Binge drinking can cause alcohol poisoning, which can lead to coma or sudden death.

Research shows that teenagers who drink are more likely to:

- attempt and complete suicide
- be physically or sexually abused
- be perpetrators of violence as well as victims of violence
- be killed in car crashes
- become infected with sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- cause unwanted pregnancies
- die in accidents such as drownings or falls
- die of alcohol poisoning
- develop an addiction to alcohol
- be harmed doing foolish stunts
- have problems in school, including social and academic problems
- have problems with family and friends

Sources:

Fackelmann, Kathleen. "Teen Drinking, Thinking Don't Mix." USA Today, online article, October 17, 2000

Wuethrich, Bernice. "Getting Stupid." Discover, Volume 22, No. 3, March 2001

Name: _____

DEGREES OF INTOXICATION

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. It is measured in percentages. For instance, having a BAC of 0.10 percent means that a person has one drop of alcohol per 1,000 drops of blood in the body.

BAC Level (%)	Feelings and Behaviors
0.01%-0.04%	Usually no apparent changes in behavior are noted. Relaxation with minor impairment of judgment and memory.
0.05%-0.08%	Walking, talking and hand movements become clumsier. Slows the person's ability to react.
0.08%-0.10%	Speech, judgment and balance are affected. Blurred vision. Slower reaction time. (Considered drunken driving in most states.)
0.10%-0.15%	Judgment, memory and self-control are further affected. Irresponsible behavior is evident. There is a decrease in the sense of pain. Speech, hearing and balance altered.
0.15%-0.20%	Behavior is greatly affected. Lack of motor control; mental confusion.
0.20%-0.30%	Unable to perform tasks. Confused or dazed state. Unconsciousness may occur. All physical and mental abilities are severely impaired.
Above 0.30%	Unconscious. Coma or death are possible.
0.40%-0.50%	Breathing stops. Irreversible brain damage occurs. Death is likely.

NOTE: All states now have Zero-Tolerance laws which set the legal blood alcohol limit for drivers younger than 21 at 0.00 percent.

Name: _____

LAWS RELATED TO UNDERAGE DRINKING

There are two basic types of laws that young people should be aware of when it comes to underage drinking:

1. Sales to Minors
2. Possession and/or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages

With the end of Prohibition, each state was allowed to make its own laws related to alcohol. Therefore laws can differ from state-to-state. Check out your own state's website for information on these laws.

Laws Related to Sales to Minors (include those which apply to the Seller):

Permittee or agent selling or delivering liquor to minor

- Violators are subject to a penalty of up to one year in prison, and/or fine up to \$1,000. (This is an unclassified misdemeanor.)

Anyone giving or delivering liquor to a minor

- Violators are subject to a penalty of up to 18 months in prison, and/or fine up to \$1,500. (This is an unclassified felony.)

Permittees or employee allowing minor to loiter on premises where liquor is kept for sale, or where liquor is served at a bar

- Violators are subject to a penalty of up to one year in prison, and/or fine up to \$1,000.

Laws prohibiting anyone from delivering or giving alcohol to minors through the Internet or via any other online computer network

- Violators are subject to a fine up to \$1,500, 18 months in prison, or both.

Laws prohibiting shipping liquor into the state in a package or carton unless: (a) the carton is clearly marked on the outside with its contents, and (b) delivery is made conditional on obtaining the signature of an individual who is at least 21 and legally authorized to receive it

- Violators are subject to a penalty of up to one year in prison, a fine up to \$1,000, or both.

Name: _____

**LAWS RELATED TO UNDERAGE
DRINKING**

Laws prohibiting permittees from selling or delivering to minors, etc., except on the order of a physician

- Violators are subject to a penalty of up to \$500 and/or imprisonment for up to 18 months. Exemptions: deliveries to a minor by her/his parent, guardian or spouse who is at least 21 years old, if the minor is accompanied by her/his parent, guardian, or spouse.

Laws Related to Sales to Minors

(include those which apply to the Minor):

Purchase, attempt to purchase or making false statements to procure

- Violators are subject to a fine from \$200 to \$500.

Willfully misrepresents age on an age statement (Some bars and restaurants will ask someone who looks young or does not resemble the photo on to their license to sign a form attesting to the fact that they are 21 or older. This form does not protect the minor; in fact, it protects the establishment by demonstrating that they checked ID at entrance. Minors who are in possession of a fake ID will still be held responsible in the case of a bar “raid” by law enforcement authorities.)

- Violators are subject to a fine of \$100 for the first offense, \$250 for subsequent offenses.

Misrepresents age or commits deception to obtain identity card, or uses another’s card

- Violators are subject to a penalty of up to 30 days in prison, and/or fine up to \$50.

Keg Registration: Over 30 states have laws that require anyone who purchases a beer keg to complete a series of forms. A unique identification number attached or engraved onto each keg is documented on the forms. In this manner, kegs found at underage drinking parties, in the woods or other locations can be traced back to the owner.

- Penalties are the same as listed above under “Providing alcohol to a minor” and “Misrepresents Age.”

**LAWS RELATED TO UNDERAGE
DRINKING**

Laws Related to Possession and/or Consumption of Alcohol

Zero Tolerance: All states have laws which state that minors are not allowed to be in possession of alcohol while operating a motor vehicle. This not only includes an automobile, but also boats, snowmobiles and ATVs or “quads.”

The standard under this law is listed as 0.00% BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration)*. The BAC level for adults and motor vehicles is 0.08%.

** NOTE: Some states list the BAC limit for anyone under 21 as 0.02%. The reason for this is solely because breathalyzer machines cannot always detect alcohol levels below 0.02% BAC. This does NOT mean that a small amount of alcohol is allowed in the blood of those under 21!*

- Penalties under this law include fines from \$200 to \$500 and suspension of driver’s license for 60 days or more.
- Penalties increase significantly if the minor’s BAC is 0.08% or higher.

Possession by Consumption: Several states have a unique law which states that youth under 21 are considered in “possession” of alcohol if they have any measurable alcohol level in their body (BAC).

- Penalties under this law are similar to those of “Minor in Possession” laws. Youth may additionally be charged with other laws simultaneously (e.g. Zero Tolerance, Misrepresenting Age, etc.).

Public Property Laws: All states prohibit minors from physical possession of alcohol on public property. This not only includes streets and highways, but also local and state parks, state forests, reservoirs, public beaches and other types of publicly-owned property.

- Penalties range from \$200 to \$500 and can include suspension of a driver’s license.

Private Property Laws: Some states and communities prohibit minors from possession of alcohol on private property as well. This could include: a home, yard, farm, fields and other locations that are owned by an individual.

- Penalties can range from \$50 to \$500 and can include suspension of a driver’s license, community service or other penalties.

Name: _____

Legal dictionaries define LIABLE this way:

“legally responsible for an act or omission. Someone who is found liable may be required to pay damages for incidents, injuries or deaths that occur.”

How does this apply to youth and underage drinking?

When young people are in possession of or consume alcohol, especially in the home or on private property, they can place their parents, guardians or other adults at risk for damages, injuries or death that might occur due to underage drinking.

Definition source:

http://www.nolo.com/lawcenter/dictionary/dictionary_listing.cfm/Term/F86A54A4-32FB-4451-B6A20AFE8A180834/alpha/L

Name: _____

BINGE DRINKING

- Binge drinking by a male is defined as consuming five or more drinks in one sitting. For a female, the definition is four drinks or more in a sitting. Both males and females face serious risks from binge drinking. People who binge drink frequently are ten times more likely to drive drunk than non-bingers.
- People who binge drink frequently are 16 times more likely to get in a car with a drunk driver than non-bingers.
- Nearly three percent of the American college population will die from alcohol-related causes.
- 30 percent of academic failures by college students are alcohol-related.
- 90 percent of all vandalism on college campuses is alcohol-related.
- Alcohol is involved in two-thirds of college suicides, 90 percent of campus rapes, and 95 percent of violent crime on college campuses.
- Students who binge drink are twice as likely to die from injuries as non-bingers.
- Approximately 80 percent of all binge drinkers have had a hangover as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 50 percent of all binge drinkers have done something they later regretted as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 40 percent of all binge drinkers have blacked out as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 30 percent of all binge drinkers have had unplanned sex as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 15 percent of all binge drinkers have had unprotected sex as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 30 percent of all binge drinkers have argued with friends as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 45 percent of all binge drinkers have missed a class as a result of drinking.
- Approximately 30 percent of all binge drinkers have gotten behind in school as a result of drinking.

Frequent binge drinkers are:

- 4.5 times more likely than non-bingers to do something they later regret.
- 7.7 times more likely than non-bingers to get behind in school work.
- 5.3 times more likely than non-bingers to have arguments with friends.
- 5.5 times more likely than non-bingers to have unprotected sex.
- 11.5 times more likely than non-bingers to get hurt or injured.
- 11 times more likely than non-bingers to damage property.
- 11 times more likely than non-bingers to get in trouble with campus police.
- 16 times more likely than

Source: *Binge Drinking on Campus, Report by Harvard School of Public Health, 1998*

Name: _____

ALCOHOL MYTHS

MYTH: Alcohol affects everyone the same way.

FACT: *Many factors affect reactions to alcohol, including body weight, mental state, and time of day. Young people are more negatively affected by alcohol than adults because their minds and bodies are still developing.*

MYTH: Drinking alcohol is part of growing up.

FACT: *Millions of young people choose not to drink. For them, there are dozens of other activities and events that signify growing up. Using alcohol and other drugs is not a “necessary” step in the path to adulthood.*

MYTH: Beer will not do permanent damage.

FACT: *All forms of alcohol present risks for the mind and body. A beer contains the same amount of alcohol found in a glass of wine, a wine cooler, a shot of whiskey, or the average mixed drink. Large amounts of alcohol, in any form, can do damage to the brain, heart, liver, and stomach.*

MYTH: The worst thing that can happen to a drinker is a bad hangover.

FACT: *The risks of drinking go far beyond the effects of a hangover. These risks include alcohol poisoning, car crashes, suicide, involvement in a crime, and unprotected sex leading to pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection.*

MYTH: It’s much worse for a teenager to use drugs than to drink alcohol.

FACT: *First of all, alcohol is a drug. In fact, it is the most abused drug in our society. It leads to addiction and health problems that destroy lives. Secondly, drinking alcohol at an early age increases the risk of alcohol addiction, as well as addiction to other drugs.*

MYTH: Harm to the body doesn’t happen until after years of drinking.

FACT: *New research proves that drinking alcohol can have long-lasting effects on a person’s brain function—especially when the person drinks heavily at a young age. These effects can become evident immediately after drinking and may last for many years.*

MYTH: Adults have drinking problems more often than young people.

FACT: *Alcohol addiction can happen to anyone. In fact, the younger a person starts drinking, the greater the risk of addiction. Many people wrongly believe that alcohol addiction is primarily an adult problem because those seeking treatment are most often adults. In truth, it simply takes most people years to recognize and accept their addictions.*

Name: _____

Here's a look at how alcohol can harm each part of the body.

Brain

Alcohol is a depressant. It slows down all the major functions of the central nervous system, causing slurred speech, mental confusion, blurry vision and poor muscle control. If enough alcohol is consumed, it severely impairs the functioning of the respiratory system, and can arrest breathing. Prolonged alcohol use can cause confusion, memory loss and brain damage.

Liver

The liver works to cleanse the body of toxins, including alcohol. Once alcohol enters the blood, the liver tries to rid the bloodstream of it. Prolonged alcohol use can cause hepatitis, cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

Stomach

The stomach also tries to remove toxins from the body—usually by vomiting. If enough alcohol is consumed, vomiting will follow. Prolonged alcohol use can inflame the lining of the stomach and cause ulcers.

Muscles

Prolonged alcohol use can cause weakness and loss of muscle tissue.

Heart

Prolonged alcohol use can cause high blood pressure, an irregular pulse rate and an enlarged heart.

Pancreas

Prolonged alcohol use can upset digestion and cause severe pain, malnutrition and early diabetes.

Reproductive System

Prolonged alcohol use can cause impotence in males. In females, it can increase the risk of menstrual problems and it can severely damage the fetus of a pregnant woman.

Name: _____

ALCOHOL POISONING

Alcohol poisoning is a severe elevation of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) that often results from consuming large amounts of alcohol. A person is at great risk of alcohol poisoning if he/she:

- Drinks excessively (four or more drinks in one sitting)
- Drinks after using medication or other drugs
- Does not respond to being talked to or shouted at
- Does not respond when being pinched or prodded
- Vomits while sleeping or passed out
- Cannot stand up or remain standing unless aided by others
- Won't wake up despite repeated attempts
- Has slow breathing (fewer than six breaths per minute)
- Has bluish or purplish skin, or skin that appears flushed
- Has clammy skin or skin that feels cool to the touch
- Has an irregular pulse rate or a pulse slower than 40 beats per minute
- Has an irregular heart rhythm, with the heart beating unusually slowly or quickly

If you see these signs:

- Don't leave the person alone!
- Call 911 for medical assistance immediately.
- Place the person on his/her side to reduce the risk of choking on vomit.
- If the person's breathing becomes slower than six breathes per minute, perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately!
- If you are no longer able to feel a pulse, or if the person's pulse goes below 40 beats per minute, perform CPR until medical assistance arrives.
- Explain what you know about what the person has ingested.

AVOIDING ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

Studies show that 75 percent of male college students and 55 percent of female college students involved in acquaintance rape had been drinking or using drugs before the rape happened. Here's what you can do to avoid a problem before it starts.

- Set sexual limits before a date. Your body is your own, and no one has the right to touch it without your permission.
- Stay out of risky situations. Go to large parties with friends you trust. Look out for one another. Leave the party with your friends. Never leave with someone you just met.
- Communicate your limits firmly and directly. Don't expect someone to read your mind or even your body language. Don't give mixed messages. Don't say "stop" and then begin kissing a few minutes later.
- Listen to your gut feelings. If you feel uncomfortable, get up and leave immediately.
- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to make waves. Shout, scratch, kick—do whatever it takes to get your point across.
- You never owe anyone a sexual favor. Do not let someone convince you otherwise.
- Never accept a beverage from someone you don't know, and never leave your beverage unattended. Rohypnol (the date-rape drug) can be slipped into any kind of drink, causing the drinker to become disoriented or unconscious.
- If you are raped or assaulted, even by a close friend, tell someone immediately. Get a medical examination as soon as possible.

For more information, call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE.

Name: _____

ALCOHOL AND PREGNANCY

Here's what you should know about drinking alcohol during pregnancy:

- When a pregnant woman drinks any alcoholic beverage—such as beer, wine, wine coolers, liquor and mixed drinks—the alcohol passes swiftly through the placenta to her fetus.
- The baby's immature organs break down the alcohol much more slowly than an adult's body would. As a result, the alcohol level of the fetus's blood can be even higher than that of the mother's blood and can remain elevated longer.
- Alcohol may harm the unborn baby's developing organs, and can cause permanent physical and mental damage to the fetus.
- Each year approximately 5,000 babies—one in every 750—are born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), a combination of physical and mental birth defects.
- Almost 50,000 babies are born each year with Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAE), a condition characterized by some, but not all, of the birth defects associated with FAS.
- Among the known causes of mental retardation, FAS is one of the most common and is the only cause that is entirely preventable.
- Babies with FAS are abnormally small at birth and usually do not catch up as they get older.
- Most babies with FAS have small eyes, a short upturned nose and flat cheeks.
- The organs of babies with FAS may not form properly—especially the heart and brain.
- Many have poor coordination, a short attention span, and behavioral problems.
- The effects of FAS last a lifetime. Even if they are not mentally retarded, adults with FAS can have severe psychological and behavioral problems.

No one knows how much alcohol will put a fetus at risk for FAS or FAE. For this reason, pregnant women should not drink alcohol at all.

Name: _____

www.ncadd.org

National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Addiction

www.niaaa.nih.gov

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism

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Other Alcohol Education Programs from Human Relations Media

<i>Confronting Drunk Driving</i>	video/print or DVD/print
<i>Targeted! How Tobacco & Alcohol Companies Try to Get You Hooked</i>	video/print or DVD/print
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<i>Dying High: Teens in the ER</i>	video/print or DVD/print
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<i>Bombed!</i>	video/print
<i>The Keg Party</i>	video/print
<i>Living a Lie: The Alcoholic Family</i>	video/print
<i>Curriculum in a Box: Substance Abuse 2003</i>	video/print curriculum
<i>Dangers of Binge Drinking</i>	folding display or overhead transparency pack
<i>Dangers of Alcohol</i>	overhead transparency pack
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