

April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol Awareness Month aims to provide the public with information about alcohol consumption and alcoholism (alcohol use disorder or AUD) as a preventable disease. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) indicates alcohol use is the [third-leading cause of preventable death](#). According to the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than 88,000 people die from alcohol-related deaths each year in the United States. Alcohol remains the number one “drug of choice” for America’s youth, and is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined.

Some authorities and parents have been known to turn a blind eye or minimize the effects of alcohol use in recent times especially with the current opioid epidemic and the fentanyl related danger for most all illicit drugs these days. This misguided justification “at least they are only just drinking” can be costly, even deadly.

We know that the still developing adolescent brain is undergoing major changes especially in the area of decision making and impulse control and alcohol use can impact healthy brain development.

[Some statistics and facts about alcohol from the identified sources](#)

- Each year, an estimated 88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes
- **80% of college students consume alcohol.**
- **15.1 million Adults in the US aged 18 and older have an alcohol use disorder (about 1 in 7)**
- Less than eight percent (8%) of those 15.1 million individuals receive treatment.
- **Over 10% of kids in the US live with at least one parent that has alcohol issues.**
- In 2021, 5.9 million young people ages 12-20 reported that they drank alcohol beyond "just a few sips" in the past month
- Alcohol-impaired driving fatalities account for 31% of overall driving fatalities
- **33.1% of 15-year-olds report having had at least one drink so far in their lifetime.**
- By age 18, about 58% of teens have had at least 1 drink
- Teen alcohol use kills around 4,700 people each year. That’s more than all illegal drugs combined
- More than 65 million Americans reported binge drinking within a month of being surveyed.
- 26.45% individuals 18 and older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month
- **Alcoholics Anonymous mentions a success rate of 50%, with 25% staying sober after some lapses.**
- About 12.7 percent of American adults meet criteria for alcohol use disorder (AUD). That’s 1 in 8 adults
- Alcohol is the only drug also considered a food due to the caloric content
- Teens who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol use disorder than if they start after turning 21.

From Partnership to End Addiction. How parents can help:

1. Talk to your children about the dangers of alcohol and drinking
2. Do serve as a positive role model
3. Do not make alcohol available
4. Get to know your children's friends
5. Have regular conversations with your children making it more likely they will be honest with you.
6. Connect with other parents to send clear and consistent messages about not drinking
7. Ensure all gatherings, celebrations and parties are supervised by responsible adults
8. Encourage your kids to participate in healthy and fun activities that do not involve alcohol

These questions can help you have honest and effective conversations with your child. Be ready to listen and focus on their health and safety rather than threats and punishments.

- What do you think about images of friends or celebrities drinking on social media?
- Why do you think movies and social media posts seem to show the fun side of drinking, but rarely the downside?
- What do you think you might say if someone offered you a drink?
 - Practicing responses such as, “No thanks, I’m not interested,” with direct eye contact and positive body language can help your child be prepared.
- If you know your child drinks, it helps to understand why, so you can address your child’s needs in a healthier way. Use questions like:
 - What do you enjoy about drinking?
 - How does drinking make you feel?

Check out this [Alcohol Guide](#) from the Partnership to be better prepared to talk to a loved one about drinking.

For help or an evaluation for alcohol/other drug problem call.

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