

## Underage Drinking Laws

- *It is illegal for anyone under the age of 21 to buy or consume alcohol.*
- *Purchasing alcohol with a fake ID can lead to prosecution.*
- *It is illegal for an adult to purchase and provide alcohol to a minor.*
- *You cannot, as a parent, give alcohol to your teen's friend under the age of 21 under any circumstances, even in your own home, even with their parents' permission.*
- *You cannot knowingly allow a minor to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol.*

*Adults who provide alcohol to minors:*

- *Are held responsible and suffer serious criminal and legal consequences which may include fines, a criminal record, probation, and jail.*
- *Can be charged under Illinois' new social host law with a Class 4 felony, punishable by 1 to 3 years in prison, and fines up to \$25,000 if someone is killed or injured as a result.*

## As a Caring Parent, You Can

- Refuse to provide alcohol to minors or allow minors to drink in your home.
- Monitor your teen's whereabouts and do not allow them to be at parties where adults are not present.
- Host parties where no alcohol is served.
- Set consequences if your child is found to be drinking and enforce them.
- Call your local law enforcement to report violations like underage drinking parties.

### **Madison County Sheriff's Anonymous Tip Line — 618-296-3000.**

Sheriff Robert J. Hertz reports that the message you leave on the recorder will be reviewed and appropriate police action will be taken.

### **St. Clair County Sheriff's Anonymous Tip Line — 1-800-640-DIME (3463).**

Sheriff Mearl J. Justus says, "no questions asked" at this alcohol and drug hotline.

**For additional information, see [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com) and [www.chestnut.org](http://www.chestnut.org).**



Keep tabs on your teen's activities. Join with other parents in making common policies about teen alcohol use.



**Chestnut Health Systems**

## Tips for Parents



**When parents talk honestly and openly—kids WILL listen.**

2148 Vadalabene Drive  
Maryville, Illinois 62062  
618-288-3100  
Fax 618-288-3371

12 North 64th Street, Suite 5  
Belleville, Illinois 62223  
618-397-0900  
Fax 681-397-0093

## Tips for Parents: Talking with Your Child About Alcohol

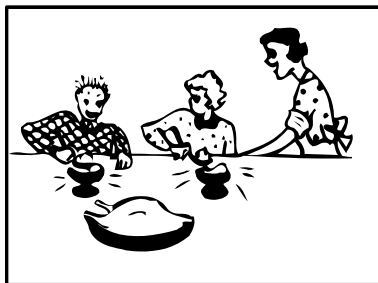
*Since 71% of teens say alcohol is easy to get, the best way to help your children avoid drinking is to have a strong, trusting relationship with them.*

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), these tips work.

- Open, trusting communication is essential.
- If your child feels comfortable talking openly with you, you have a greater chance of guiding him/her toward healthy decision making.
- Encourage conversation. Listen without interruption.
- Ask open-ended questions. How does he/she feel about what you are discussing?
- Control your emotions. Try not to respond with anger, instead, "I'm concerned. . ."
- Make every conversation a "win-win" experience. Don't lecture; show respect for their viewpoint.

Action checklist from NIAAA's [Make a Difference: Talk to Your Child About Alcohol](#).

- Establish a loving, trusting relationship with your child.
- Make it easy for your teen to talk honestly with you.
- Talk with your child about alcohol facts, reasons not to drink, and ways to avoid drinking in difficult situations.



"I'm hearing you say drinking isn't a big deal at school. I'm not there, but I'd like for us to talk about what we know about alcohol."

- Develop family rules about teen drinking and establish consequences.
- Set a good example regarding your own alcohol use and your response to teen drinking.
- Encourage your child to develop healthy friendships and fun alternatives to drinking.
- Know whether your child is at high risk for a drinking problem. If so, take steps to lessen the risk.
- Know the warning signs of a teen drinking problem and act promptly to get help for your child.
- Believe in your own power to help your child avoid alcohol use.

## Teens Staying in Tip-Top Shape Means No Alcohol

*Most parents believe that underage drinking occurs, but very few believe that their own children are involved.*



- Alcohol is a strong drug that slows down the body and mind. It messes up coordination, slows reaction time, impairs vision and judgment, and stops clear thinking.
- Drinking too much, too fast, can lead to death by alcohol poisoning.
- The adolescent's brain is not fully developed and is especially sensitive to damage from alcohol.
- An adolescent can become addicted to alcohol in as little as 6 to 18 months.
- One in five alcoholics in the U.S. is between the ages of 13 and 17.
- Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become alcoholics than those who wait until 21.
- High school students who use alcohol are five times more likely to drop out of school and to believe that good grades are not important.

## Tipping the Balance in Favor of Safety and the Law

*Alcohol use and abuse is a major factor in automobile crashes, date rape, school failure, and violence.*

### Zero Tolerance Penalties

If a driver is under 21 with a blood alcohol concentration greater than .00, the consequences are serious. Driving is a privilege and comes with responsibility.

- 1st offense—test failure—loss of driving privileges for 3 months.
- 1st offense—test refusal—loss of driving privileges for 6 months.
- 2nd offense—test failure—loss of driving privileges for 1 year.
- 2nd offense—test refusal—loss of driving privileges for 2 year.

### References

Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Inc. (Springfield, Missouri), pamphlet. See [www.nounderagedrinking.com](http://www.nounderagedrinking.com)

NIAAA, National Institutes of Health; [Make a Difference: Talk to Your Child About Alcohol](#). Revised 2002. See [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov). (This site also has a great chart of warning signs.)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), [Consequences of Underage Alcohol Use](#). See [www.samhsa.gov/csap](http://www.samhsa.gov/csap)

US Dept of Human and Health Services. [The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking](#), 2007. See [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).

**Tip-Tap: May we have your attention for a moment?** If you are a concerned parent worried that your child is already using alcohol, you are not alone. Talk to the school counselor; talk to your doctor; get a referral for an assessment; call an agency like **Chestnut Health Systems (618-288-3100)** for professional help. Help and information are very available. We all care about protecting kids from the hazards of underage drinking. Let's talk about it.