

**PARENTS,
DID YOU
KNOW?**



49%

of high school seniors in NY
have consumed alcohol in the
past 30 days – that's more
than 100,000 seniors.

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers:

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States. Although it is illegal, young people under age 21 drink 11 % of all alcohol consumed in the U.S. Did you know:

- 90% of alcohol is consumed by teens in the form of binge drinking, a pattern of drinking alcohol usually in less than 2 hours (5 or more drinks for males or 4 or more drinks for females).
- It is estimated that 5,000 people under age 21 die every year from alcohol-related injuries from traffic fatalities, suicides and homicides.
- Research has also shown a specific link between heavy alcohol use and youth suicide.

You can keep kids safe from alcohol and drugs. Learn how.

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

Find help: 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

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**13-year-olds in NYS
has tried alcohol**

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers:

Today, the average girl has her first drink at 13; boys at 11. Underage drinking happens earlier than most know. Drinking at a young age greatly increases the risk of developing alcohol problems later in life.

Preteens are beginning to understand the concept of actions and consequences, so this is a good time to start important discussions around alcohol.

- Talk early. Start as early as preschool, as the ages of 5 to 8 is the best time to begin to explain what alcohol is and what it can do.
- Between the ages of 9 and 13, youth begin to think that alcohol use is okay. It is during this time they will experiment with it, especially if it is in the house.
- Tweens and teens are influenced very much by what they see and hear in popular media. Talk to your kids about alcohol advertising.

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**Most kids who consume
alcohol do so in their
own home or in the
home of a friend**

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers:

Monitoring your kids is an easy and important step to ensure they are not engaging in dangerous behaviors. The key is for parents to make sure they check their kid's activity inside the home, as well as, outside.

- Be sure your children know alcohol in your home is off limits to them and to their friends.
- Don't keep alcohol in your refrigerator and invest in a cabinet lock for your liquor.
- Watch water and soda bottles. Check them when your kids' friends are bringing these to a hang-out or sleepover at your house.
- If they go to a friend's house, call to make sure parents will be home and there will be no alcohol.
- Remember, parents who allow their teens and friends over to drink may be vulnerable to lawsuits and fines.

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A teen who begins drinking before the age of fifteen is 7 times more likely to have an alcohol abuse problem later in life than someone who waits until age 21 to drink alcohol.

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers:

Alcohol affects the mind and body in often unpredictable ways. Tweens and teens lack the judgment and coping skills to handle alcohol wisely. This can lead to problems at school, and your child being more likely to be involved in violent crime, sexual assault, traffic-related crashes and robbery.

- Alcohol affects all parts of the brain, which can affect coordination, emotional control, thinking, decision-making, hand-eye movement, speech, and memory.
- The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.
- Alcohol reduces the level of serotonin which assists in learning and problem solving and enables our need for calm.

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Nearly 52% of NY students in grades 7-12 reported their parents had never talked to them about the dangers of underage drinking.

Dear Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers:

Talking and sharing your thoughts about alcohol with your kids is essential! It is also important to hear their point of view. Give your kids the opportunity to ask you questions, and listen to what they have to say. Children who have parents that listen to their feelings and concerns are more likely to say "no" to alcohol.

- Ask open-ended questions and avoid questions that have a simple "yes" or "no" answer.
- Encourage your kids to tell you what they think and feel about the issue you're discussing.
- Listen without interruption. Your active listening will start a trend for future conversations.
- Watch your tone of voice and body language. Your kids focus on this, and it can distract their focus from the conversation.

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