

TIPS FOR TEENS

THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL

SLANG - BOOZE, SAUCE, BREWS, BREWSKIS, HOOCH, HARD STUFF, JUICE

Get the facts...

Alcohol affects your brain. Drinking alcohol leads to a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts.

Alcohol affects your body. Alcohol can damage every organ in your body. It is absorbed directly into your bloodstream and can increase your risk for a variety of life-threatening diseases, including cancer.

Alcohol affects your self-control. Alcohol depresses your central nervous system, lowers your inhibitions, and impairs your judgment. Drinking can lead to risky behaviors, such as driving when you shouldn't, or having unprotected sex.

Alcohol can kill you. Drinking large amounts of alcohol at one time or very rapidly can cause alcohol poisoning, which can lead to coma or even death. Driving and drinking also can be deadly.

Alcohol can hurt you—even if you're not the one drinking. If you're around people who are drinking, you have an increased risk of being seriously injured, involved in car crashes, or affected by violence. At the very least, you may have to deal with people who are sick, out of control, or unable to take care of themselves.

Before You Risk it...

Know the law. It is illegal to buy or possess alcohol if you are under age 21 (for Guam under age 18).

Get the facts. Young people who began drinking before the age of 15 are four times likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait under the age of 21.

Stay informed. "Binge" drinking is defined as male individual having 4 more drinks and females having 3 more drinks on a single occasion. Binge drinking can lead to alcohol poisoning.

Know the risks. Alcohol is a drug. Mixing it with any other drug can be extremely dangerous. Alcohol and acetaminophen—a common ingredient in OTC pain and fever reducers—can damage your liver. Alcohol mixed with other drugs can cause nausea, vomiting, fainting, heart problems, and difficulty breathing. Mixing alcohol and drugs also can lead to coma and death.

Keep your edge. Alcohol is a depressant, or downer, because it reduces brain activity. If you are depressed before you start drinking, alcohol can make you feel worse.

Know the signs...

How can you tell if a friend has a drinking problem? Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may have a problem with alcohol:

- Getting drunk on a regular basis
- Lying about how much alcohol he or she is using
- Believing that alcohol is necessary to have fun
- Having frequent hangovers
- Feeling run-down, depressed, or even suicidal
- Having "blackouts"—forgetting what he or she did while drinking

Alcohol Use Facts for Guam Youth:

- 71.3% of all HS students have had at least 1 alcoholic drink, 38% are current drinkers.
- 8.5% had 1st drink at age 8 or younger, 17% have gone binge drinking, 10% have driven a car after drinking alcohol.
- In 2005, 64.3% of youth assessed at DYA experimented with alcohol. This represents an increase from previous years. Alcohol use was associated with other criminal behavior in majority of the cases.
- 27.2% of Juvenile Drug court clients report alcohol as the 1st substance abused.
- 30.3% of youth screened at the Juvenile Drug Court report alcohol as the primary substance of current abuse.
- According to GPD, of minors taken into custody for alcohol and drug violations in 2005, 49% were for alcohol-related offenses.

What can you do to help someone who has a drinking problem? Be a real friend. You might even save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help.

For information and referrals:

Call the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse:
CRISIS HOTLINE - 647-8833
Drug & Alcohol Branch - 475-5438
Prevention and Training Branch
477-9079 thru 82 or 477-2301-4
Website: www.peaceguam.org
www.healthychoicesguam.org
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 800-729-6888

Q. Aren't beer and wine "safer" than liquor?

A. No. One 12-ounce bottle of beer or a 5-ounce glass of wine (about a half-cup) has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor. Alcohol can make you drunk and cause you problems no matter how you consume it.

Q. Why can't teens drink if their parents can?

A. Teens' brains and bodies are still developing; alcohol use can cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism.⁵ People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol

than those who begin drinking after age 20.⁶

Q. How can I say no to alcohol? I'm afraid I won't fit in.

A. It's easier to refuse than you think. Try: "No thanks," "I don't drink," or "I'm not interested." Remember that the majority of teens don't drink alcohol. You're in good company when you're one of them.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Do it today!
Check out the Web site at <http://www.freevibe.com> or visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>
SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information 800-729-6688 / TDD 800-487-4888
línea gratis en español 877-767-8432
Website: ncadi.samhsa.gov

It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

The bottom line: If you know someone who has a problem with alcohol, urge him or her to stop or get help. If you drink—stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life.

To learn more about alcohol or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact:

department of
MENTAL HEALTH &
SUBSTANCE ABUSE



INFORMATION

Through Phone/Fax:
Phone: 671-477-9079 thru 9083
Fax: 671-477-9076
On The Web: www.peacegum.org
www.healthchoicesgum.org



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