

Alcohol Facts – Why Underage Drinking is Not a Good Idea

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, including having unprotected sex. This may expose you to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases or cause unwanted pregnancy.

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 21.

Get the Facts. One drink can make you fail a breath test.

Stay Informed. “Binge” drinking means having five or more drinks on one occasion.

Know the Risks. Mixing alcohol with medications or illicit drugs is extremely dangerous and can lead to accidental death.

Keep Your Edge. Alcohol can make you gain weight and give you bad breath.

Look Around You. Most teens aren’t drinking alcohol. The *2009 Lewis County Prevention Needs Assessment Survey* concluded that 72% of Lewis County teens have never used any sort of illicit drug, including alcohol and tobacco. ***So your peers are not all drinking.***

How Can You Tell If a Friend Has a Drinking Problem?

Sometimes it’s tough to tell. But 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.
- Having problems at school or getting in trouble with the law.

Source: www.ncadi.samhsa.gov

What Can You Do To Help Someone Who Has a Drinking Problem?

Be a real friend. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. Calling the Hope Helpline at 1-877-846-7369 will give your friend information on places to go for an evaluation and possible treatment. Locally, the Lewis County Community Recovery Center at 315-376-5958 can help.