

Help any kid understand the consequences of underage drinking

Give them 3 fast facts

About their friends

A lot of kids believe “everybody does it.” But underage drinking isn’t as popular in Wisconsin as you’d think.

- 1 70% of Wisconsin teens say they don’t currently drink.¹
- 2 Teen alcohol use is at its lowest rate ever in Wisconsin.¹
- 3 Only 16% of Wisconsin high schoolers report using alcohol before age 13.¹

About their brain

Alcohol affects kid’s brains more powerfully than adults, and drinking before the brain is fully grown can have devastating effects.

- 1 Drinking alcohol can slow a teen’s brain activity for weeks.²
- 2 It can damage the parts of the brain responsible for learning, memory, and self-control.¹
- 3 Underage drinking can have long-lasting effects that continue to impact kids’ brain functions when they’re adults.³

1 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Summary Report, 2017.

2 Alcohol & The Adolescent Brain: Immediate Impairment, Long-Term Consequences, 2016

3 Alcohol’s Effects on the Adolescent Brain: What Can Be Learned from Animal Models.

4 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2017.

5 Alcohol & Public Health Fact Sheet: Underage Drinking, 2018.



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About the risks

Underage drinking can seriously impact nearly every aspect of a young person’s life, from their behavior and relationships to their mental health.

- 1 17% of kids who drink have been in a car with a driver who’d been drinking alcohol.⁴
- 2 Drinking can lead to issues at school, with friends, and with the law.⁵
- 3 Underage drinking is associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide.⁵

About binge drinking

Loosely defined as having 4 or 5 drinks in just 2 hours, binge drinking is especially dangerous for kids.

- 1 Around 90% of underage drinking is binge drinking.⁵
- 2 Kids who drink are more likely to experience alcohol poisoning.⁵
- 3 Binge drinking lowers inhibitions at a time when youth are already eager to take risks.²

Small Talks

How WI Prevents Underage Drinking

SmallTalksWI.org



Your Kids Look Up To You... You Are Their Role Model

Whatever you say to your children about avoiding alcohol, they will also be observing how you use alcohol. They take their cues from you, so:

✓ While you may want to pour yourself a drink after a long day at work, it's better not to give your kids the message that alcohol is a problem solver by coming home and saying out loud that you've had a bad day and need a drink.

✓ If your kids are around, use alcohol in moderation and don't be intoxicated in front of them. Make a conscious effort to keep your drinking stories among adults. Hearing your stories may glorify the act of drinking alcohol.

✓ Be conscious of what you're posting online, especially if your kids can see what you're posting. Memes about alcohol as "Mommy juice" or "This is why Daddy drinks" can make alcohol sound like a cool joke that kids want to be in on.

✓ When out to eat with your children at a restaurant, have the conversation in front of your kids about who is driving home after a parent has been drinking. Let it be the "norm" that your kids see you make the conscious decision to not drink and drive or ride in a car with someone who has been drinking.

✓ When you are entertaining adults and kids are in the house, let kids see that you are including alcohol-free beverages and plenty of food, and that you are making sure everyone has a safe ride home.

Alcohol In The Home

Some parents lock up their liquor (gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey), but not their beer and wine. The thought might be that beer and wine are at least "safer" than the "hard stuff." The truth is that a 12-oz can of beer, a 5-oz glass of wine and 1.5 oz of 80-proof liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol — and ALL alcohol should be off-limits to anyone under the age of 21.

Lock It Up! Consider locking up all your alcohol and prescription drugs so that they cannot be accessed by your children or their friends.

Know What You Have In Stock. It is important to know what's inside your medicine and liquor cabinets – even if they are under lock and key. If you notice something is missing, don't be afraid to ask questions.