



# KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY

get the facts on

# ALCOHOL

ALCOHOL **IS** A DRUG AND UNDERAGE DRINKING IS A LEADING PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM IN THE US.

Teen alcohol use can seriously impact brain development, damaging critical areas in the brain responsible for learning and memory.

Adolescent drinkers do worse in school and have an increased risk of social issues, depression, suicidal thoughts, and violence. Teens that drink are more likely to be sexually active.

When youth drink they tend to drink heavily, often consuming 4 to 5 drinks in a short amount of time. This is known as binge drinking.

Binge drinking is dangerous. It hurts decision making, creates a loss of control over emotions, and alters heart rate and temperature. It can even alter consciousness. It can result in death from alcohol poisoning.

## What can parents do?

- Discuss the dangers associated with underage drinking
- Monitor and lock up any alcohol in your home
- Model behavior that you want your kid's to follow. Kids look at the adults in their lives to know what's acceptable. Practice safe driving habits. A designated driver is someone with no alcohol in their system.
- If you have a blood relative with a history of addiction (or any problems with alcohol) consider making your home an alcohol-free zone and warn your kids that they *may have a genetic predisposition to alcoholism*.
- Set clear expectations of no alcohol use under 21. Research shows that kids really do listen to their parents when deciding to drink or not.
- Help your kids learn and practice skills so they can avoid underage drinking and peer pressure from their friends and others.
- Pay attention to where your kids go and who they're with. Get to know the parents of your kids' friends. Just having an adult present doesn't always guarantee a safe environment. Make sure your kids know that you will pick them up anywhere anytime with no questions asked, and praise them for their wise decisions.