

Adolescence and Alcohol

Every 15 minutes someone dies in an alcohol related vehicle accident. Each weekend, each hour a teen dies in an automobile accident. Fifty percent of those accidents are alcohol related.

The misuse of alcohol is a very serious problem in the United States. Alcoholism ranks third, after heart disease and cancer in the causes of death recorded annually. Alcohol abuse is not confined to any one area, sex, race, or age. The average age when youth first try alcohol is 11 years old for boys and 15 years old for girls. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21.

It has been estimated that over three million teenagers are alcoholics. Several million more have a serious drinking problem that they cannot manage on their own. The three leading causes of death for 15 to 24 year olds are automobile crashes, homicides, and suicides. Alcohol is the leading factor in all three.

Drinking has become the "in" thing for so many of our young people, that it has become the number one drug problem of teenagers and children in this country.

DEFINITION OF ALCHOLISM

"Alcoholism is a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by continuous or periodic: impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with the drug alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial."

The use of alcohol makes people feel more free and less inhibited, but it also depresses the user's reaction time and ability to make good judgments. Resulting in teen pregnancy, fights, embarrassing behavior, and acts of crime.

Children obtain access to alcohol in many different ways. They may sneak it from their parents, persuade strangers to purchase it for them, or attempt to create faked identification and purchase it themselves. Although law enforcement attempts to eliminate all of the possibilities that allow a teenager to acquire access to alcohol, but prevention must begin with the child's parents and home environment.

Talk to your teens about alcohol but most importantly LISTEN to your child. Alcohol abuse among adolescents can be a warning sign of emotional problems that the child is suffering from. Depression, abuse, anger, anxiety, peer pressure are all factors that can essentially lead to a child using alcohol.

If you fear that your child is already involved in alcohol abuse don't become angry. Seek intervention and support your youngster. There are many wonderful programs available for families of teen alcoholics.

Remember that Alcoholism is a disease that is treatable. Would you take your child to a doctor if he/she had pneumonia?

You may save your child's life.



HOW TO SOBER UP A DRUNK

Black coffee: all you get is a wide-awake drunk.

Walking: all you get is a tired drunk

Cold showers: all you get is a wet drunk

Time is the only way to make a person who is drunk, sober. The amount of time needed for alcohol to leave a person's body depends on the weight of the person and how the person's body works. On the average, a 150 lb. Person needs approximately 2 hours to get rid of the amount of alcohol found in one can of beer. Remember, the more a person drinks, the more time a person needs to sober up.

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