



UNDER THE LEGAL LIMIT Drinking Can Land You in Jail . . . or Worse

Some teens treat drinking like it's no big thing – but they're dead wrong.

If you're underage, it's a crime to drink. Get caught with alcohol and you're facing penalties, from fines and tickets to community service and mandatory alcohol education classes.

If you drink and drive, the stakes are even higher. (That is, if you don't kill yourself or someone you love before you get pulled over). Statistics show that drinking and driving is the leading cause of teen deaths in the U.S.

If you get caught drinking and driving, you're looking at some pretty serious penalties, including jail time, fines and probation – and you might even lose your driver's license. Plus, you'll have a criminal record, which might make it hard to find jobs or get into college.

TALKING BACK Saying "No" to Alcohol

What do you say when someone offers you a drink? A simple "no" always does the trick. Or, you could try one of these:

- "Sorry. I have to drive tonight."
- "No thanks. I don't like beer."
- "No way. My mom'll kill me if I come home smelling like alcohol."



TEST YOURSELF!

What do you know about alcohol? Take this quiz and find out.

1. A process called _____ turns the sugars in fruits and vegetables into alcohol.
 - a. mitosis
 - b. fermentation
 - c. decomposition
 - d. pigmentation
2. Your liver can only handle about _____ every hour.
 - a. one drink
 - b. two drinks
 - c. three drinks
 - d. four drinks
3. The organ that filters alcohol out of your system is:
 - a. your brain
 - b. your heart
 - c. your liver
 - d. your stomach
4. " _____ " is the name for when adults serve alcohol to underage teens.
 - a. social hosting
 - b. social media
 - c. alcohol hosting
 - d. underage hosting
5. Which is NOT a short-term effect of alcohol?
 - a. dizziness
 - b. weight gain
 - c. nausea
 - d. slurred speech

Answers: 1. b; 2. a; 3. c; 4. a; 5. b

UNDERAGE DRINKING



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OUT OF CONTROL

WHEN GOOD FRUITS AND VEGGIES GO BAD

Fermentation, Alcohol, and Your Body

When you think of healthy foods, you probably think of things like whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Did you know that those healthy foods can be turned into something dangerous? A process called fermentation breaks down the natural sugars in those foods and turns them into a deadly poison: Alcohol.

When you drink alcohol, your liver goes into overdrive, working hard to remove the toxins from your system. That's why people who abuse alcohol often end up with serious liver damage.

It takes your liver about an hour to break down an ounce of alcohol. If you drink any more than that, your liver can't keep up – that's why people sometimes feel dizzy, confused, and uncoordinated hours after they stop drinking.

DRINKING YOURSELF TO DEATH

Binge Drinking and Alcohol Poisoning

Your liver can only handle about one drink every hour – and that's why binge drinking is so dangerous. Binge drinking is drinking several drinks in a short amount of time (usually about four or more drinks in one sitting).

When you binge on alcohol, you're flooding your system with alcohol so quickly that your liver can't keep up. When your liver can't get the toxins out of your system, you may end up with alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol poisoning is life threatening. If a person suffering from alcohol poisoning doesn't get medical attention right away, they can wind up in a coma – and they might even die. Some of the signs of alcohol poisoning are:

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizures
- Confusion
- Vomiting
- A drop in body temperature
- Slow, irregular breathing

Remember: Alcohol poisoning can kill. If you suspect that one of your friends has alcohol poisoning, get help immediately.

SHORT AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol is a depressant. It messes with your brain's ability to send messages to other parts of your body. When you drink alcohol, everything slows down – your vision is blurry, your movements are clumsy and you have trouble speaking and thinking clearly.

People who have more than two or three drinks at a time start to feel buzzed, or even drunk. They experience effects like:

- Blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Vomiting and nausea
- Loss of balance and dizziness

It gets worse, though: People who drink alcohol aren't thinking straight, and they're more likely to make bad decisions like driving drunk, or having unprotected sex.

In the long term, alcohol abuse can cause serious health issues, including:

- Alcohol addiction
- Liver problems, such as cirrhosis
- Depression
- Impaired brain development (in teens)
- Memory loss
- Risk of stroke and cancer
- Obesity

WHAT IS SOCIAL HOSTING?

Some adults think it's okay to let teens drink – as long as they do it at home, when there's an adult present. They may allow their kids to throw parties with alcohol, and they may even provide the drinks. That's called "social hosting."

The truth is, it's illegal to serve alcohol to underage teens – and parents who let teens drink are actually breaking the law. If an adult gets caught providing alcoholic drinks to someone under the legal age limit, they could go to jail.

Remember: It doesn't matter if someone's parent tells you it's okay. If you're not old enough to drink, don't do it. Period.

UNHAPPY BIRTHDAY

Debra, a California teenager, had been planning her 18th birthday celebration forever and the big day had finally arrived. A month before, she invited everyone on her Facebook friends list. She got her 22-year-old friend, Christina to hit the liquor store and purchase a few hundred dollars' worth of alcohol. About 30 people showed up for Debra's party, and everyone had an awesome time. As her friends started to leave, Debra noticed that two of her friends, Scott and Alexander, were pretty wasted. She asked them if they wanted to sleep on the couch or call a cab, but Scott insisted that he was fine – just a little buzzed.



That was the last time Debra saw her friends alive: On their way home, Scott's car crashed into a light pole. Scott and Alexander were killed instantly. A year later, Debra and Christina were convicted of a felony: Providing alcohol to minors. At their trial, they had to relive the accident all over again and they had to face Scott and Alexander's families. Christina ended up going to jail. Debra received several years of probation. She's alive, and she's sorry for what happened – but she'll never forget her 18th birthday.

