

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 Nearly 75% of Wisconsin teens say they don’t drink.¹
- 2 Teen alcohol use is at its lowest rate ever in Wisconsin.¹
- 3 Under 17% 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, 2021.

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.

6 2022 Kids Count Data Book: Wisconsin’s Children of Color More Likely to Face Mental Health Issues.

7 Lupine Online Journal of Nursing & Health Care.



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 In 2022, 60% of Native American children in Wisconsin were diagnosed with anxiety or depression—conditions closely associated with underage drinking.⁶

About binge drinking

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

- 1 Over 27% of Native American youth, ages 12–17 reported binge drinking within the last 30 days according to a 2022 study.⁷
- 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