

SOBERING STATISTICS

Results of a recent survey of students conducted in the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District regarding alcohol usage have spurred concern among parents and authorities alike. It is troubling to note that over 90% of the students in grades 9 to 12 who participated in the survey reported that alcohol is fairly easy or very easy to get.

Not surprisingly, among those who reported trying alcohol, the majority have used it at parties. But it is most distressing to learn that nearly 40% of the students tried alcohol at parties where the parents of the teen hosting the party were aware of the drinking. And almost half of the juniors responding said they used alcohol at a home party without the parents' knowledge. Nearly 50 percent of 11th and 12th graders who responded they used alcohol reported they could not remember what happened after drinking and about 35% reported passing out.

We all need to remember that the legal drinking age in New Jersey is 21. Parents providing alcohol for minors or allowing minors to consume alcohol at their homes are violating the criminal code. Fines up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail can be imposed for this offense. Serving alcohol to minors also places significant liability on the parent.

Know what your responsibilities really entail

The Law

NJSA 2C:33 – 15 (NJ Criminal Code) establishes a criminal offense for an underage person to consume or possess alcohol in a public place or motor vehicle.

Wyckoff Ordinance #1521 prohibits underage individuals from consuming alcoholic beverages on private property.

NJSA 2C:33 – 17(b) (NJ Criminal Code) establishes a criminal offense for any person who makes their home or property available, or leaves such home in the care of another person who makes such property available, for the purpose of allowing underage persons to consume alcohol.

NJSA 2C:33-17(a) (NJ Criminal Code) establishes a criminal offense for any person who makes available an alcoholic beverage to a person under the legal drinking age.

WHERE CAN YOU TURN FOR HELP?

Safe Homes201-337-9168
 Wyckoff Police Department201-891-2121
 Addiction Helpline for Parents
 Support/NJ Inc800-561-4299
 National Hopeline Network:800-SUICIDE
 Suicide Prevention (800-784-2433)
 National Runaway Switchboard800-RUNAWAY
 (800-786-2929)
 Parents Anonymous/Family Helpline800-843-5437
 Rape Crisis Hotline (24 hours)201-487-2227

E-MAIL CONTACTS

Ramapo HS SADD* Advisor ppappas@rih.org
 Indian Hills SADD* Advisor dmartin@rih.org
 Ramapo HS Student Assistance
 Counselor** mkohlbrener@rih.org
 Indian Hills Student Assistance
 Counselor** tkersting@rih.org

USEFUL WEBSITES

Start Talking www.starttalkingnj.com
 SADD* www.SADD.org
 Ramapo/Indian Hills School District www.rih.org
 Parent Helpline and Support
 Groups www.linkup-parents.com
 National Council on Alcoholism
 and Drug Dependence www.ncaddnj.org
 For Teens www.whatsyourantidrug.com

* Students Against Destructive Decisions
 ** SADD and Teens Needing Teens Contact

This publication made possible by:

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UNDERAGE DRINKING:

You Can't Turn Your Back On This Issue



Important Information For Wyckoff Parents

Please read this information carefully. You will be tested on it at some point.

PARENTS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE PROACTIVE APPROACH

As a parent, you have the most influence on your child's decisions about drinking. Preparing your teen for the challenges and decisions about alcohol consumption must begin before they are faced with these situations. Parents need to educate teens that their actions have

serious consequences. Not only do statistics show that alcohol-related car crashes are the number one cause of death for persons between the ages of 14 and 22, but incidents of alcohol poisoning are not uncommon. The law holds parents responsible for these serious consequences when they allow underage drinking at their home.

Talk, talk, talk and talk some more with your teen about dealing with peer pressure and discuss feasible

ways to turn down alcohol and other drugs. Among the most important things to discuss with your teenager is the issue of drinking at home or at friends' parties, and the consequences that will result.

Set guidelines that they may attend only parties that will be supervised and where no alcohol will be served. Agree that they will never get into a car with a driver who has been drinking. Let your child know that they can always call you at anytime to pick them up if they find themselves in difficult circumstances.

SOME SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

We are approaching the season for proms, graduations and summer parties. These occasions may provide a venue for teenage drinking.

If you are holding a party in your home, discuss the guidelines with your child beforehand. Some strategies are:

- A parent must be home during the party. Circulate among the guests and make your presence known.
- Set specific hours for the party and establish the number of guests attending.
- Do not let teens leave and return to the party.
- Provide plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages.

If your teen is attending a party, make sure you:

- Have the name, address and phone number of the party host.
- Confirm with the host that the party will be supervised responsibly and that no alcohol will be served.
- Establish a time when your teen will come home.
- Set up an agreement with your teen that they will not drive while intoxicated or get into a car with a driver who has been drinking.



CONSEQUENCES OF USE

- More than 40% of individuals who begin drinking before age 13 will develop alcohol abuse problems or dependence at some point in their lives.
- Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen car crashes and 50-65 percent of youth suicides. Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.
- Nearly 28% of New Jersey's 7th and 8th graders who used alcohol in the past 30 days got F's in school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR PARENTS

- It's a criminal offense in New Jersey to allow underage drinking in your home, so for starters, you're looking at a disorderly persons charge, which means a record and a fine.
- Your homeowners insurance may increase. The company may even drop you. Most policies don't cover damage or theft from underage drinking parties.
- If an underage party-goer drives after drinking, it will cost you. If there is a crash, you are responsible and can be sued.
- Injuries, alcohol poisoning, sexual assault, drowning, or suicide may result in lawsuits. You will be held civilly liable if sued by another parent.
- You can't put a price on relationships, but take note – you've just lost the trust of other parents and you've lost the respect of your neighbors and friends.

Guidelines for communicating with your child about drinking

- **Be a good role model.** Telling your child that they should not drink then over-indulging in alcohol yourself sends a mixed message. If you drink, do so responsibly.
- **Communicate the facts.** Speak frankly about the effects of alcohol. Don't use scare tactics.
- **Set up clear rules with established consequences** for your teen and stick with them. Often having a teen do a task such as mowing the lawn or taking out the trash is more effective than grounding them or taking away privileges.
- **Know your child's friends.** Friendship is an important part of our lives. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- **Keep the lines of communication open.** Talk with your teen about dealing with social pressure, as well as feasible ways to turn down alcohol and other drugs. Encourage dialogues with your teen.

The Results of Alcohol Poisoning Can Be Dire

Celebrations, hazing and challenges or dares many times involve the abuse of alcoholic beverages, a practice that should never be condoned. These activities encourage young people to consume more alcohol than their bodies can process. Consuming 21 shots in an hour to celebrate turning 21 or drinking a full bottle of alcohol on a dare are typical scenarios leading to alcohol poisoning.

It is estimated that as many as 4,000 deaths occur each year from alcohol poisoning. Many of them are first-time drinkers who never had alcohol before. And even if a person does not die, alcohol overdose can lead to irreversible brain damage.

Some critical signs of alcohol poisoning:

- Mental confusion, stupor
- No response to pinching skin
- Vomiting while sleeping
- Seizures
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Hypothermia, bluish skin color, paleness

Common myths about alcohol poisoning

Many people incorrectly believe the following will sober a person up: Drinking coffee ■ Taking a cold shower ■ Sleeping it off ■ Walking it off

What should you do if you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning?

- Call 911 immediately. Time is critical and a quick response may save a life.
- Do not leave the person alone. Continue to try to revive them.
- Turn the person on their side to prevent them from choking if they vomit.
- Monitor their breathing closely. If they stop breathing, have someone begin CPR.