

# 21 Reasons To Prevent Underage Drinking

## ...What's your reason?

<p>1. Alcohol kills more youth in this country than all other illegal drugs combined. <sup>[i] [ii]</sup></p>	<p>2. Only one-third of underage drinking deaths involve auto crashes. The remaining two-thirds involve homicides, suicides, and injuries like alcohol poisoning, burns, drowning, and falls. <sup>[iii]</sup></p>	<p>3. Underage drinking costs the state of Maine more than \$100 million per year in direct damages. <sup>[iv]</sup></p>
<p>4. Contrary to popular belief, most kids don't drink. In Maine, most high school seniors have not consumed alcohol during the past 30 days. <sup>[v]</sup></p>	<p>5. Adolescent brains are still growing. When youth drink alcohol, their brain development is damaged with both short-term and long-term effects. <sup>[vi]</sup></p>	<p>6. Young people who start drinking before age 17 are twice as likely to develop alcohol dependence as those who wait until age 21. <sup>[vi]</sup></p>
<p>7. Youth who start drinking by age 15 are more than four times as likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until age 21. <sup>[vi]</sup></p>	<p>8. Underage drinkers are at higher risk for academic failure and dropping out of school. <sup>[vii]</sup></p>	<p>9. Underage drinkers are at higher risk for depression and suicide. <sup>[vii]</sup></p>
<p>10. Underage drinkers are at higher risk for sexual assault, rape, and other violence. <sup>[vii]</sup></p>	<p>11. Underage drinkers are at higher risk for teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections or diseases. <sup>[vii]</sup></p>	<p>12. Youth who use alcohol are more likely to abuse other substances, including marijuana, tobacco, and prescription drugs. <sup>[vii]</sup></p>

<p>13. The legal drinking age matters: European teens actually drink more often, drink more heavily and get drunk more often than American teens. <sup>[viii]</sup></p>	<p>14. Every year, at least 1,000 fewer lives have been have been lost in alcohol-related vehicle crashes since the minimum legal drinking age was changed to 21. <sup>[ix]</sup></p>	<p>15. Law enforcement matters: youth who believe they won't get caught by police are four times as likely to drink as those who think they will get caught. <sup>[x]</sup></p>
<p>16. Parental monitoring matters: youth who believe they won't get caught by their parents are five times as likely to drink as those who think they will get caught. <sup>[x]</sup></p>	<p>17. Our messages matter: youth are three times as likely to drink if they believe parents or other adults in their community think underage drinking is okay. <sup>[x]</sup></p>	<p>18. We need to speak loudly if we want our voices heard. The alcohol industry spends more than \$5 billion in advertising each year. <sup>[xi]</sup></p>
<p>19. Access matters: in Maine, youth who think that alcohol is easy to get are four times as likely to drink as students who think alcohol is hard to obtain. <sup>[v]</sup></p>	<p>20. In Maine, one in three middle school students report that alcohol is easy to get. By high school, two in three students report that alcohol is easy to get. <sup>[v]</sup></p>	<p>21. Underage drinking is a problem that impacts every member of our society, and it is the collective responsibility of ALL of us to take action.</p>

[i] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. National Institutes of Health. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Ninth Special Report to the U.S. Congress on Alcohol and Health, NIH Publication No. 97-4017, 1997.

[ii] Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), June 28, 2002 / 51(SS04);1-64: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5104a1.htm>

[iii] Hingson & Kenkel, 2004. Social, health, and economic consequences of underage drinking. In *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility, Background Papers*.

[iv] Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), October 2006.

[v] Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey (MYDAUS), 2008: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/osa/data/mydaus/index.htm>

[vi] Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking, 2007

[vii] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2007: [http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/quickstats/underage\\_drinking.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/quickstats/underage_drinking.htm)

[viii] Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, 2005. *Youth Drinking Rates and Problems: A Comparison of European Countries and the United States*

[ix] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2005

[x] Maine Office of Substance Abuse, March 23 2009: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/osa/about/news/2009/mydaus08.htm>

[xi] Federal Trade Commission, *Self-Regulation in the Alcohol Industry, Appendix B: Alcohol Advertising Expenditures*, iii