

21 Reasons: Who We Are

21 Reasons is a coalition of community members, organizations, and businesses with a common goal: to build a healthy community environment with policies, practices, and attitudes that support the drug-free development of all youth.

OUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

Our action teams are supported by a broad base of community volunteers and organizational representatives. Partners include law enforcement, schools, government and service agencies, neighborhood associations, businesses, faith organizations, parents, and youth. In other words, 21 Reasons is made up of all of us.

YOUR PART, YOUR REASONS

It's easy to help.

- ▶ Reduce youth access to alcohol.
- ▶ Strengthen enforcement of underage drinking, furnishing, and hosting laws.
- ▶ Create a community environment that makes it easy for children to make healthy choices.

Please join us.

21 REASONS

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21 Reasons and You: Making a Difference Together



"Set clear rules, and explain why they're important. I may not act like I'm listening, but I am."

"I like it when you want to meet my friends. It shows you're interested in what I do."



"Having me check in doesn't mean that you don't trust me—just that you care."

"Help me stay safe by keeping track of your alcohol. My friends and I know where you keep it."



"Thank you for waiting up for me at night. It helps me to make better choices."



21 Reasons is part of Maine's Environmental Substance Abuse Prevention Center (MESAP) at Medical Care Development, Inc.



...what's your reason?

www.21reasons.org



It's up to all of us to send healthy messages—both with our words and our actions.

There are lots of reasons to prevent underage drinking.

A few of them really stand out.

► **BRAIN DEVELOPMENT**

- The adolescent brain is still developing, so it's more vulnerable to addiction.
- Teens who start drinking before age 17 are twice as likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until age 21.

► **RISK FACTORS**

- Alcohol affects a teen's brain differently than an adult's brain—especially the part that controls decision-making.
- Teens who drink are at higher risk for many problems including academic failure, depression, sexual assault, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infection.

► **PERSONAL COST**

- Two-thirds of underage drinking deaths are caused by homicides, suicides, alcohol poisoning, and unintentional injuries such as burns, drowning, and falls.
- One-third of underage drinking deaths are caused by alcohol-related vehicle crashes.



These brain images show how alcohol may harm teen mental function. Compared with a non-drinker, a 15-year-old heavy drinker showed poor brain activity during a memory test. This is illustrated by the lack of pink and red coloring in the brain scan.

Image from Susan Tapert, PhD, University of California, San Diego

"Adolescent alcohol use is not an acceptable rite of passage, but a serious threat to adolescent development and health."

Kenneth P. Moritsugu, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Surgeon General

www.surgeongeneral.gov



HERE'S WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.

► **SET CLEAR RULES—AND ENFORCE THEM.**

- Teens are four times less likely to drink alcohol when they believe they'll be caught by police.
- Teens are five times less likely to drink when they believe they'll be caught by their parents.

► **REDUCE ACCESS.**

- Teens are four times less likely to drink alcohol when it's hard to get.
- Unfortunately, over two-thirds of Maine high school students report easy access to alcohol.

► **BE A ROLE MODEL.**

- Alcohol is everywhere, and the alcohol industry spends more than \$5 billion in advertising each year.
- Teens often get mixed messages from the media and adults in their lives about what's expected when it comes to underage alcohol use.