

# The Dangers of Underage Drinking

Underage drinking is a significant public health problem in the United States.

## Prevalence of Underage Drinking

- Almost 50% of adolescents have had at least one drink by the time they had reached eighth grade; 20% have reported being drunk at some point in their lives
- The 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that in the past 30 days high school students had:
  - 29% drank alcohol
  - 14% participated in binge drinking
  - 17% rode with a driver who had been drinking
  - 5% drove after drinking
- According to NSDUH, 1.6% of adolescents have Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)



## Consequences of Underage Drinking

- Problems in school, such as high absences, lower grades, or fighting
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity
- Family conflict
- Mental health problems occur significantly more frequently
- Greater risk to experiencing physical and sexual violence
- Increased likelihood of using other drugs
- Increased risk of suicide and homicide
- Increased risk of being involved in an alcohol-related car accident

## Effects on the Brain due to Underage Drinking

- Adolescents who use alcohol may fail to develop emotionally and cognitively due to alcohol's effect on the hippocampus
- Heaving drinking can lead to problems with planning, executive functioning, spatial operations, memory, and attention



## Life Outcomes due to Underage Drinking

- Adolescent learning impairments due to alcohol could affect academic and occupational achievement
- People who began drinking before the age of 14 are 41% more likely to develop alcohol dependence
- In 2018, 47.8% of almost 85,000 liver disease deaths involved alcohol
- In 2009, alcohol related diseases accounted for 1 in 3 liver transplants

## References

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