# Alcohol Awareness Month

In the US, underage drinking is a serious public health problem. Among teens and young adults in America, alcohol is the most widely abused substance. Drinking by young people poses significant health and safety risks. The consequences of underage drinking can affect everyone— regardless of age or drinking status. During this time of uncertainly and the need for social distancing, we are spending more time at home with our family. This is an opportunity to talk with your teen about your views on underage drinking and life in general. Start a conversation today!

Underage Drinking Statistics

Many young people drink alcohol
- By age 15, about 29.8 percent of teens have had at least 1 drink.
- By age 18, about 58.0 percent of teens have had at least 1 drink.
- In 2018, 7.1 million young people ages 12–20 reported that they drank alcohol beyond "just a few sips" in the past month.

More adolescents use alcohol than cigarettes or marijuana
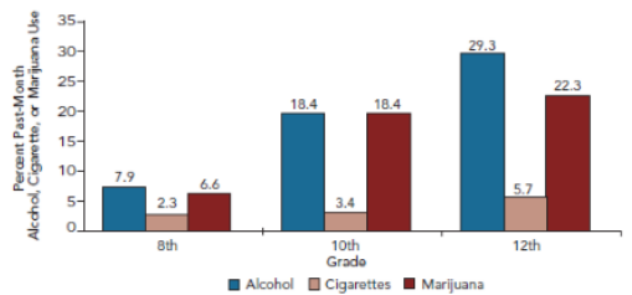
SOURCE: Miech, R.A.; Schulenberg, J.E.; Johnston, L.D.; et al. *Monitoring the Future National Survey: Trends in 30-Day Prevalence of Use of Various Drugs in Grades 8, 10, and 12.* Table 3. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2019. Available at: http://monitoringthefuture.org/data/19data/19drtbl3.pdf. Accessed 1/13/20.

The Role Parents Play

Parents can help their children avoid alcohol problems by:

1. Talking about the dangers of drinking.
2. Drinking responsibly, if they choose to drink.
3. Serving as positive role models in general.
4. Not making alcohol available.
5. Getting to know their children's friends.
6. Having regular conversations about life in general.
7. Connecting with other parents about sending clear messages about the importance of not drinking alcohol.
8. Supervising all parties to make sure there is no alcohol.
9. Encouraging kids to participate in healthy and fun activities that do not involve alcohol.

-NIH-National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

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