

WE CAN DO BETTER!

ONLY ABOUT **1/2**
OF GRUNDY COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS REPORT
THAT A PARENT
TALKED TO THEM
ABOUT NOT USING
ALCOHOL IN THE
PAST YEAR.*

*2014 IL Youth Survey (Grundy County Report)

Underage drinking is a major public health problem. To help with your talks, look inside for questions you might hear and information to address them.

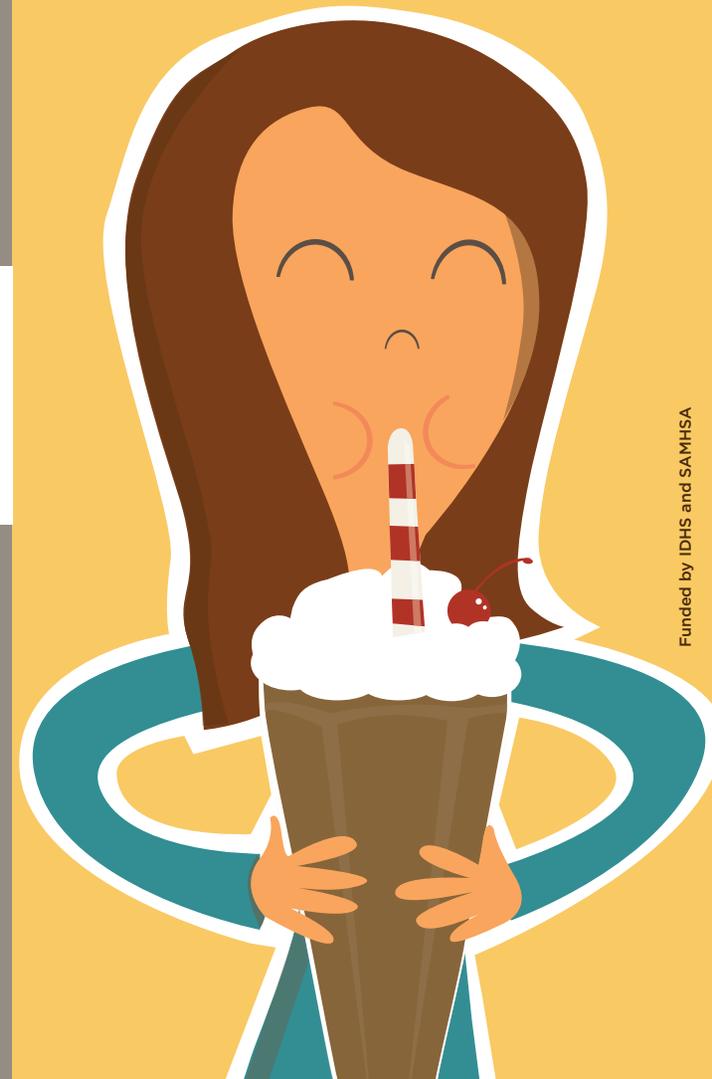


Be a Parent. Talk to your teen about alcohol.

BE THEIR GUIDE. *Don't provide.*

www.grundyparents.org

PARENTS GUIDE *to* UNDERAGE DRINKING

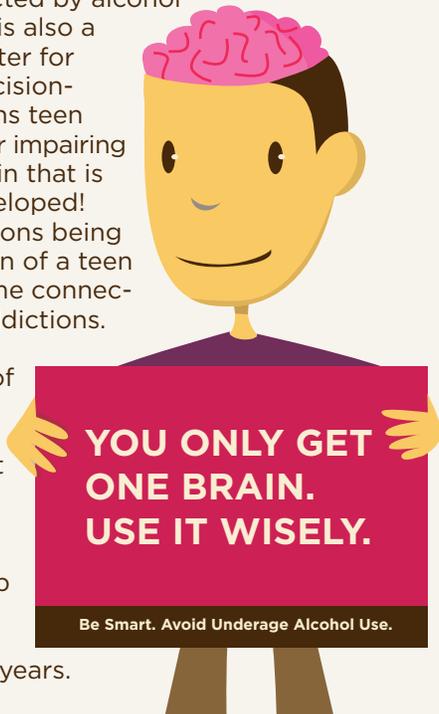


WHAT'S DIFFERENT BETWEEN TEEN DRINKING AND ADULT DRINKING?

Science helps us to see why staying with a minimum drinking age of 21 is a good idea. We know that brain development isn't done until the early or mid-twenties. Teen brains are more susceptible to alcohol's effects, including poor decision-making and the potential for substance use disorders. When teens drink, they tend to drink heavily and can often find themselves getting hurt or hurting others.

SHOULD I REALLY TALK WITH MY TEEN ABOUT BRAIN SCIENCE?

It is totally up to you as a parent, but we think it is truly beneficial for teens to know the "why" behind what parents are asking them to do or not to do. We think it's important to understand that the first area of the brain impacted by alcohol (the frontal lobe) is also a late-maturing center for reasoning and decision-making. This means teen drinkers are further impairing an area of the brain that is already underdeveloped! Also, the connections being formed in the brain of a teen drinker can become connections for future addictions. This is part of the reason why 90% of addictions have roots in the teen years. Think about that... 90%. On average, it takes a teen only six months to develop a full blown addiction. For an adult, it may take years.



SO, TEENS WHO DRINK HAVE INCREASED RISK OF OTHER SUBSTANCE USE?

Yes, and use of alcohol and other drugs at the same time can multiply the risks. Marijuana use by teens is a significant problem, but use of that as well as drinking enhances the risks from using either substance.

SHARE THESE FACTS *with your TEEN:*

- You do not want them to drink alcohol or use marijuana.
- In Illinois, marijuana has only been approved for medicinal use and even in states where recreational use is allowed, the legal age is 21 just as it is for alcohol.
- This minimum age is in place because there is no such thing as "safe" drinking or marijuana use when your brain is still developing.
- It is against the law to provide alcohol to minors or marijuana to anyone without a doctor's orders.
- Under Illinois Social Host Law, adults can receive a fine of \$500, be arrested or go to jail for providing alcohol to minors. Adults providing marijuana to teens can also have legal ramifications and/or DCFS involvement.
- Parents found to be providing marijuana to their children will be reported to the Department of Children and Family Services.
- The law is a reflection of the known impacts of teen drinking and marijuana use on community health and is based on facts rather than opinions.

UNDER ILLINOIS SOCIAL HOST LAW, ADULTS CAN RECEIVE A FINE OF \$500, BE ARRESTED OR GO TO JAIL FOR PROVIDING ALCOHOL TO MINORS.



WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO DISCOURAGE OUR TEENS FROM DRINKING?

BEFORE THEY GO OUT...

- Set a curfew and discuss consequences if they were to break it.
- Ask them where they will be, what they plan to do, and who will be with them.
- Ask how they plan to react if they encounter alcohol or marijuana.
- Tell them they can call you at any time for help if they feel unsafe.
- Tell them to keep their cell phone with them and not to make any changes to the itinerary without first talking with you.
- Tell them they need to speak with you as soon as they come home, even if they have to wake you up.

UPON RETURNING HOME...

- Either be awake or make sure your teen knows to wake you.
- Have a conversation with your teen to make sure he or she is coherent.
- Check for signs and smells of alcohol or marijuana use. (Some parents require their teens to kiss them on the cheek so they can get a good smell. Determine what works for your family!)
- Ask how the evening went and if there were any problems.

It is sometimes a hard line to walk, helping and not hindering development as teens become adults. We don't want to be overly restrictive but at the same time we don't want to trust blindly. grundyparents.org is designed to help you navigate this line.

Visit us at grundyparents.org.