PARENTS WHO HOST LOSE THE MOST

Don't be a party to teenage drinking.

It's against the law.

LEGAL, HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

LEGAL ISSUES

Parents should know:

- As a parent, you cannot give alcohol to your teen's friends under the age of 21 under any circumstance, even in your own home, even with their parent's permission.
- You cannot knowingly allow a person under 21, other than your child, to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol.

If you break the law:

- You can face a maximum sentence of six months in jail and a $1,000 fine.
- Others can sue you if you allow anyone under 21 to consume alcohol and they, in turn, hurt someone or damage property.
- Officers can confiscate any alcohol, money or property used in committing the offense.

HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

Some common reasons parents give for hosting underage drinking parties include:

- I'd rather my kids drink at home than in a car
- At least they're not doing drugs
- If I let them drink a little now, they won't go crazy when they turn 21
- I did it when I was young and I'm ok
- Kids will be kids

The fact is, underage drinking is hazardous to the health and safety of those under 21.

#1 If your child drinks alcohol, it is likely that the alcohol will affect his/her brain development.[1]

- The human brain continues to develop into the mid-twenties.
- If alcohol is heavily consumed in adolescence, the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory can shrink by about ten percent.
- When it comes to behavior and brain function, while alcohol has as sedative effect on adults, it acts as a stimulant to adolescents. The more alcohol consumed, the more likely youth are to engage in risky behaviors. Furthermore, due to this stimulant effect, youth are more likely to drink past the point where adults would end up passing out.

#2 If your child drinks alcohol, you will more likely have to deal with those issues parents dread.

- Kids who drink are more likely to become sexually active (putting them at greater risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases).[2]
- Teen girls who binge drink are 63% more likely to get pregnant in their teen years.[3]
- Students who use alcohol are five times more likely to drop out of school or to believe that earning good grades is not important.[4]

#3 If your child drinks alcohol, he/she is at a greater risk of becoming addicted later in life. [5]

- 40% of children who start drinking before the age of 15 will become alcoholics at some point in their lives.
- If the onset of drinking is delayed by five years, a child's risk of serious alcohol problems is cut in half.

[1] American Medical Association (2003). *Harmful Consequences of Alcohol Use on the Brains of Children, Adolescents, and College Students.*

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[2] Cooper and Orcutt. Drinking and sexual experience on first dates among adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 106:191-202, 1997. Cooper, Pierce, Huselid . Substance use and sexual risk taking among black adolescents and white adolescents. *Health Psychology* 13:251-262, 1994.

[3] Dee (2001). *The Effects of Minimum Legal Drinking Ages on Teen Childbearing*. *The Journal of Human Resources* 36, no. 4: 824-838.

[4] National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Survey Results on Drug Use from *The Monitoring the Future Study, 1975-1997, Volume I: Secondary School Students*, Rockville, MD: Department of Health and Human Services, 1998.

[5] Grant, B.F., 1998. NIAAA's Epidemiologic Bulletin No. 39 The Impact of a Family History of Alcoholism on the Relationship Between Age at Onset of Alcohol Use and DSM-IV Alcohol Dependence. *Results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey, Alcohol Health and Research World* 22(2).

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