

Alcohol: Costs & Consequences of Abuse, Underage Use and Disorderly Conduct

Alcohol

May affect your ability to
make wise decisions



Possession of Alcohol Under 21 Years of Age: “What’s the deal??? It’s Just a Drink!”
“Well, you’re just NOT 21!”

- Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs.
- Although drinking by individuals under the age of 21 is illegal, people aged 12-20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States.
- More than 90% of this alcohol is consumed in the form of binge drinks.
- On average, underage drinkers consume more drinks per drinking occasion than adult drinkers.
- In Florida, underage possession of alcohol is a crime. A first offense is a second degree misdemeanor, punishable by up to 60 days in jail, six months of probation, and a \$500 fine. A second or subsequent offense is a first degree misdemeanor, with penalties including up to one year in jail, a \$1,000 fine, and one year of probation.
- Underage drinking contributes to more than 3,500 deaths among people under 21 years of age.

- Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:
 - School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades;
 - Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities;
 - Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk;
 - Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses; Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity; Disruption of normal growth and sexual development;
 - Physical and sexual assault; Higher risk for suicide and homicide;
 - Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning;
 - Memory problems; Abuse of other drugs; Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects; Death from alcohol poisoning.
- In general, the risk of youth experiencing these problems is greater for those who binge drink than for those who do not binge drink.
- Alcohol has a clear connection to violence and aggression, more than any other drug
- As a result many people end up arguing or fighting, and some are charged with Battery, Disorderly Conduct , or Affrays, where alcohol is a contributing factor.

- Youth who start drinking before age 15 years are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who begin drinking at or after age 21 years.
- States with more stringent alcohol control policies tend to have lower adult and college binge drinking rates.
- A Minimum Legal Drinking Age of 21 results in lower levels of alcohol consumption among young adults 21 years of age and older as well as those less than 21.
- The Task Force on Community Preventative Services recommends that states adopt and maintain a minimum legal drinking age of 21 based on strong evidence of effectiveness, including a median **16% decline in motor vehicle crashes among underage youth** in states that increased the legal drinking age to 21 years.
- Being intoxicated, especially in a public place, can be a reason for a disorderly conduct charge. Florida Statute 856.011 makes it a crime to be drunk and endanger the life or property of another person or to be drunk in a public place or conveyance and cause a disturbance.
- Disorderly conduct is a second degree misdemeanor which is punishable up to 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. If convicted of this crime three times within the previous 12 months, you can be committed to a facility for up to 60 days.

The Costs are High

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in 2023, **12,429** people were killed in crashes involving a driver with a Blood or Breath Alcohol Level (BAC) higher than 0.08. That's about **one death** due to "Drunk Driving" **every hour**. M.A.D.D states that **every minute 1 person is injured** from an alcohol related crash.
 - ❖ 2,117 deaths have resulted from the driver having a BAC of 0.15 or higher.
 - ❖ The most frequently recorded BAC level among drinking drivers in fatal crashes was 0.16.
- One out of every three people will be involved in an alcohol related crash in their lifetime.

A search of the internet shows that portable breath tests are sold for \$30 to \$100.

