

The Impact of Underage Drinking

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is a series of information pages designed to provide general information about some of the consequences of underage drinking.

According to the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey, alcohol continues to be the most widely used drug among Illinois youth. Survey results show that in the past year more students drink alcohol than use cigarettes, inhalants, and marijuana combined.

Underage drinking is the focus of the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success program. Through this program, communities in Illinois are provided with resources to prevent the onset and reduce the progression of underage drinking and its related problems.



Injuries, Car Crashes, and Death

Underage alcohol use is a factor in the injuries and deaths of thousands of Illinois young people under the age of 21 each year. Underage drinking also plays a role in motor vehicle crashes and violence that result in injury and death for others.

A March 2015 report by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) indicated that underage drinking in Illinois resulted in:

- 26 traffic fatalities
- 1,215 nonfatal traffic injuries
- An estimated 48 homicides
- 22,600 nonfatal violent crimes such as rape, robbery, and assault
- 30,200 property crimes including burglary, larceny, and car theft
- 566,000 public order crimes including vandalism, disorderly conduct, loitering, and curfew violations
- 10 fatal burns, drownings, and suicides

ILLINOIS CRASH FACTS AND STATISTICS

At all levels of blood alcohol concentration (BAC), the risk of involvement in a motor vehicle crash is greater for teens than for older drivers.

- Ten percent of Illinois high school students ages 16 and older report drinking and driving. Two percent of 12th graders reported drinking and driving more than six times in the past 30 days.
- Twenty-six percent of drivers 16-20 killed in Illinois crashes tested positive for alcohol use, including six percent with BACs over 0.20 (0.08 is the legal limit in Illinois).
- Teen drivers accounted for almost five percent of overall motor vehicle crash, pedestrian, pedalcyclist and motorcycle fatalities in Illinois. Of those, 89 percent were tested for BAC, with 24 percent testing with a BAC of 0.01 or greater.

TEEN ALCOHOL USE, VIOLENCE AND INJURIES

According to the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey, during the past 12 months Illinois teens experienced the following while or after drinking alcohol.

	10th graders	12th graders
Been in trouble with the police	1%	2%
Damaged property	1%	2%
Got into an argument or fight	6%	9%
Been hurt or injured	4%	5%
Been a victim of a violent crime	1%	1%
Been treated in a hospital emergency department	1%	1%
Rode in a car driven by someone (including themselves) who was “high” or had been using alcohol or drugs	16%	26%

Nationally:

- Between 2010 and 2013, an estimated 656,827 alcohol misuse–related ED visits were made by patients aged 12 to 20. Alcohol-only visits accounted for 79 percent of all underage alcohol misuse–related visits. Drug and alcohol combination visits accounted for 21 percent.
- In 2016, 15 percent of drivers aged 15 to 20 involved in fatal motor vehicle crashes had a BAC of .08 or higher.
- In 2013, there were approximately 119,000 emergency rooms visits by persons aged 12 to 21 for injuries and other conditions linked to alcohol.
- Underage drinkers of flavored alcoholic beverages (alcopops) who exclusively consume the supersized versions are more than six times as likely to report suffering alcohol-related injuries compared to underage youth who drink other types of alcoholic beverages, according to a study from researchers with the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Boston University School of Public Health.
 - Alcopops include malt-based flavored beverages (e.g., Mike’s Hard Lemonade or Smirnoff Ice); spirits-based premixed, ready-to-drink cocktails (e.g., Jack Daniel’s cocktails); and supersized alcopops (e.g., Four Loko or Joose).
 - Supersized alcohol beverages can contain the equivalent of between four and five alcoholic drinks.
 - According to the 2018 Illinois Youth Survey, among the youth who used alcohol in the past 30 days, 33% of 8th graders, 39% of 10th graders, and 41% of 12th graders used alcopops.

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