

BROOMFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT



Alcohol use by persons under age 21 years is a major public health problem. Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs. Although drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, people aged 12 to 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 drinking. On average, underage drinkers consume more drinks per drinking occasion than adult drinkers. In 2008, there were approximately 190,000 emergency room visits by persons under age 21 for injuries and other conditions linked to alcohol.

DRINKING LEVELS AMONG YOUTH

The 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that among high school students, during the past 30 days:

- 42% drank some amount of alcohol.
- 24% binge drank.
- 10% drove after drinking alcohol.
- 28% rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.

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 the age of 21.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- School problems, such as absenteeism 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.
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects.
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.
- Physical and sexual assault.
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide.
- Memory problems.
- Death from alcohol poisoning.

Information provided by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention; printed with funds provided by the Liquor Enforcement Division, Colorado Department of Revenue. For additional questions or concerns contact the Public Education Coordinator at 720-887-2084.