

[5 Myths About Underage Drinking](#)



Providing alcohol to anyone under the age of 21 has long been illegal, but it still occurs frequently. Many people see alcohol as a rite of passage or a normal part of growing up. You should *never* provide alcohol to minors. Please note the following myths and facts concerning underage drinking.

Myth #1: It's not that big of a deal.

Social hosting, or providing alcohol to minors, is against the law. Any adult who serves alcohol to underage youth, or who is aware of it being served to underage youth on their property, may be legally responsible and liable for all of the destructive and deadly damage that may result. Providing alcohol to a minor is a Class A Misdemeanor, punishable up to one year in jail and a fine up to \$4,000.

Myth #2: It's safe to let my kids and their friends drink in my house as long as I don't let them drive.

It is important to note that drinking and driving is not the only risk associated with underage drinking. The combination of alcohol and young people celebrating increases their risk for other drug use, promiscuity and unprotected sex, and injury. Alcohol can damage brain cells, interact negatively with medications, and lead to loss of control and violence. Binge drinking can lead to loss of consciousness and alcohol poisoning, which often results in death.

Myth #3: I need to introduce my teens to alcohol so they can learn to drink responsibly. Young people who start to drink before the age of 15 are four times more likely to meet the criteria for alcohol dependence at some point in their lives, according to a report by the National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism. Other research shows that the younger someone is when they start to drink, the more likely they will be to engage in other risky behaviors like binge drinking, risky sex, using marijuana and other drugs, and earning

grades that are Ds and Fs in school.

Myth #4: It's really not a big deal. Everyone is doing it.

This is not true. In fact, in Texas, most teens aren't active drinkers -- 79% of teens report no alcohol consumption in the past 30 days. The perception that everyone is drinking is false, and can lead to unnecessary peer pressure.

Myth #5: Teens are going to drink no matter what their parents say or do.

This isn't true either! Research shows that the #1 influence on youth behavior is still parents. Parents – you may not think your teen is listening but you make the biggest difference.

Communicate! Talk to your teen about all the potential consequences of drinking alcohol and explain that you do not approve of underage drinking because it is dangerous and illegal. It is important for parents to ask their teenager where they will be at all times and what they will be doing. Emphasize the importance of watching out for careless and possibly drunk drivers. Encourage your teen to call you at any time if a safe ride home is needed.