

TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO PREVENT UNDERAGE DRINKING

Alcohol is readily available in most communities. We all know but sometimes forget that alcohol plays a large role in automobile crashes, violent crimes, child abuse and neglect, workplace and household injuries, and other serious social problems. We also know that early alcohol use, such as consuming alcopop beverages, can impair a young person's ability to develop into a healthy, productive adult.

Here are ten things you can do to prevent and reduce underage drinking in your family and community:

LIMIT ACCESS OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES TO UNDERAGE YOUTH

1. Work with your local elected officials to ensure that your local community has laws in place to reduce underage drinking, such as requiring keg registration; making alcohol outlets liable for harm occurring from providing alcohol to minors; requiring conditional use permits for alcohol outlets with limits on outlet location and density and hours of sale; prohibiting or restricting home delivery of alcohol; and requiring responsible beverage service training for servers and operators.
2. Raise the price of alcoholic beverages to reduce alcohol purchases, especially among minors, through fees and taxes.
3. Make sure laws on sales to underage youth are vigorously enforced.

REDUCE IMPAIRED DRIVING

4. Establish and enforce "zero tolerance" laws for drivers under 21.
5. Implement sobriety checkpoints for impaired drivers and vigorously enforce and publicize enforcement of impaired drivers.

WORK WITH SCHOOLS AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS TO GET THE MESSAGE TO STUDENTS AND MEMBERS

6. Adopt school policies on alcohol use on school property and at school-sponsored events at all levels from elementary, middle, and high schools as well as colleges and universities.
7. Implement prevention programs for classrooms and youth groups that teach youth to become more sophisticated about the manipulative techniques of advertisers and that offer alcohol- and drug-free alternative activities.

SEND A UNIFIED COMMUNITY MESSAGE

8. Express a unified community message against underage alcohol use by prohibiting or controlling alcohol use at community events or in public areas; prohibiting alcohol sponsorship of public events; and controlling alcohol advertising in areas frequented by youth and their families.
9. Express support for alcohol- and drug-free healthy lifestyles by sponsoring community activities for youth and their families; organizing parent coalitions to reduce alcohol use by their children; and conducting media campaigns and counteradvertising.
10. Talk to your children about the dangers of early alcohol use and encourage friends and neighbors to talk to their children, too.

RESOURCES:

Keep Kids Alcohol Free: Strategies for Action. Leadership to Keep Children Alcohol Free. August 2005. www.alcoholfreechildren.org.

Strategies to Reduce Underage Alcohol Use: Typology and Brief Overview. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, United States Department of Justice. June 1999.

Center for Science in the Public Interest – Alcohol Policies Project. <http://cspinet.org/booze/>.

The Marin Institute. www.marininstitute.org.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. www.niaaa.nih.gov.