



Girl Talk

**Choices &
Consequences
of
Underage
Drinking**

A Guide for the Mom
of a Teenage Girl

First The Good News

From 1997 to 2007 annual alcohol consumption has declined 30% and 30 day consumption has declined 35% among eighth grade students.¹ Drinking in older students has also declined. The bad news is that, in the face of this decline, the data also reflects a slower decline in underage drinking among our nation's girls.

This pamphlet is designed to serve as a resource for moms to address the problem that underage drinking poses in their own families. Included are useful insights and information to discourage their underage daughters from drinking alcohol. It also highlights research findings on girls, moms, and underage drinking.

But why would your underage daughter choose to drink?

The majority of mothers and daughters surveyed by Teenage Research Unlimited listed "to fit in with friends or other kids" and "peer pressure" as the top reasons teens choose to drink. Alarming, over half of the girls say one of the TOP reasons they drink is "for fun," and 34% say they drink because they "like the feeling of being drunk."

What are these girls thinking?

How can they see "fun" in an activity that could lead to their arrest, loss of privileges or even injury or death? And why would they like being drunk, which can lead to vomiting, hangovers, missed activities and stupid behavior?

Can mom help here?

Moms Matter

Moms are the most important influence in a teen's decision to drink or not to drink alcohol, and involved parents who set clear rules protect their daughters against potential drinking problems. Middle school-aged girls view their mothers as wise advisors on all topics including friends, boys, and school. "Serious" conversations on drinking are important and welcome.

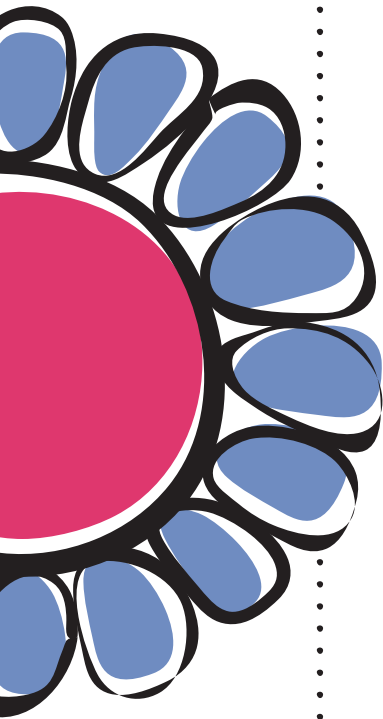
Yet as young girls transition from middle school to high school, they will naturally begin to assert their independence. Mothers are often unprepared for how this transition will change their relationship — particularly the reaction of many daughters to clam-up. Unfortunately rather than working to keep the lines of communication open, the reaction of many mothers is to give up. Know that even if she does not respond with more than a grunt, it is very likely that...

**your daughter is listening
to what you say!**

"It is important to Girl Talk that our Leaders and Girls are informed about the dangers of underage drinking. Therefore, we have partnered with The Century Council to ensure that mothers and caregivers have the tools they need to talk to young girls about this very important issue."

– Haley Kilpatrick
founder & executive director





It's true—

Moms Can Make A Difference...

(if they know what to say and what not to say)

“BE CAREFUL” & “DON'T DRINK & DRIVE” are NOT the only messages you need to communicate!

Concerned about the risk of being “shut-out” by their daughters, moms too often communicate a vague message of “be careful” or a promise of amnesty — to give them a ride home if they have been drinking — because moms want their daughters to feel comfortable calling them should they need help. Moms need to know that while daughters, especially older daughters, say they go out of their way to avoid such discussions with their mothers, an overwhelming number of daughters report they are more comfortable talking about drinking alcohol, drugs, and smoking cigarettes than they are about discussing dieting, dating, and sex. Moms need to tell their under-age daughters without equivocation not to drink and come to either them or another adult if they have questions or think they have a problem.

The Data

Surveys say...girls ARE drinking:

An estimated **4.5 million 12-17 year old girls** report consuming alcohol in the past year.²

About **39% of 9th grade girls**, usually about 14 years old, report drinking in the past month.³

Nearly **16% of girls ages 12-20** reported binge drinking (*five or more drinks in a row*) in the past month.⁴

....and the girls say the same thing:

Overall, daughters reported drinking alcohol on significantly more occasions than their mothers realize. Mothers do not realize how much girls are drinking.

Age 11 is not too early to start talking with your daughter about the dangers of underage drinking. Frequent conversations with clear messages and expectations should be going on at ages 12 and 13, and should continue throughout your daughters' high school years and beyond as peer pressure to drink increases with age.

Moms—

Start the conversation early and have it often

Listen... don't lecture or overreact!

Be approachable. The fact that your daughter may be asking about alcohol does not mean that she is drinking. Keep an open mind and try not to overreact during the discussion.

Keep your conversation real and personal. Seize opportunities to discuss real life situations and consequences — examples from the news or experiences of people you know.

Be a parent not a friend. Share your parental values and set rules. Make it clear that underage drinking is not okay under any circumstances.

Discuss the risks of underage drinking, and not just those that are associated with drunk driving. Consider that girls are three times more likely than their mothers to believe that underage drinking is okay under adult supervision away from home as long as you don't drive.

Make sure she knows help is available. Tell your daughter that if she thinks that she or a friend has a problem that you can either help or find someone who can help.

Supervise your daughter and know who her friends are, where they are going, and what they are doing. Encourage her to maintain friendships with other girls who are making good choices and decisions.



Things That Will Make Your Daughter Think Twice

Highlighting the following information in your conversation can make it more effective:

Depression, girls and alcohol.

Teenage girls experience depression 50% more than teenage boys, regardless of alcohol consumption. Twelve to sixteen year old girls who are current drinkers are four times more likely than their non-drinking peers to suffer depression.⁵ Moreover, adolescent girls who are heavy drinkers are more likely than boys to say they drink to escape problems or because of frustration and anger.⁶ Severe cases of depression can lead to suicide.⁷

Females are more susceptible to intoxication and alcohol poisoning than males.

Several factors contribute to girls getting intoxicated more quickly than males. Most people think it has to do with body weight, but this is only one factor. Females also have less water in their bodies and do not break down alcohol as efficiently as males. Therefore, if a female and a male of the same size and weight drink the same amount of alcohol, the female will reach a higher concentration of alcohol in her blood.⁸ The bottom line is that females of all ages tend to be more susceptible to alcohol poisoning and can reach life-threatening levels of intoxication faster than males of the same age. Moms should remind their daughters of these gender differences.

Impaired judgment can place young women's physical safety and sexual health at risk.

Teenage girls who are heavy drinkers are five times more likely than non-drinking girls to engage in sexual intercourse and a third less likely to use condoms, which makes them vulnerable to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.⁹ Additionally, impaired judgment and reduced coordination resulting from intoxication may lead to other physical harm resulting from falls or physical altercations.

Alcohol can effect a girl's reproductive development.

Heavy drinking during adolescence has been shown to disrupt normal cycles and reproductive function. Drinking heavily when young can have long lasting affects.

Alcohol can be even more dangerous for young girls with body image or weight concerns.

Many teenage girls have concerns about their body image and experience weight management problems. For young girls who may not eat properly or who have a low daily caloric intake, drinking alcohol can place them at a higher risk of intoxication and, in extreme cases, of alcohol poisoning which can cause death. Also, because alcohol has more calories per gram than carbohydrates, drinking alcohol may lead to weight gain. Alcohol also stimulates appetite, so people tend to eat more when they drink.

So Mom, Be A Mom

Useful information is not useful if it's not used. Take these tips and make the time today to talk with your daughter about the dangers of underage drinking. For more tips, data and information on keeping your daughter alcohol-free, visit www.girlsanddrinking.org or check out the resources listed in this pamphlet.

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention / www.cdc.gov

The Century Council / www.centurycouncil.org

Girl Talk / www.desiretoinspire.org

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

National Institutes of Health / www.nih.gov

Society for Women's Health Research / www.womenshealthresearch.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration / www.samhsa.gov

About the Research

The Century Council commissioned Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU) to conduct a comprehensive research project to better understand the dynamics of underage drinking among mothers and daughters. TRU fielded a study in April 2005 among a national on-line sample — a total of 875 respondents (496 daughters and 379 mothers; 322 of them matching) completed the questionnaire. Quotas were set to ensure that a representative number of daughters (and mothers) from each of the following age segments completed the survey: 13-15 year olds, 16-18 year olds, and 19-20 year olds. The mother-daughter results presented here reflect the matched mother and daughter data collected. TRU conducted an additional self-administered on-line omnibus survey, Omnibuzz™, among 802 13 to 18 year olds in August 2005. The data were weighted for key demographic variables (gender, age, ethnicity, parent education, region, community-type, and place of school) to reflect the national population. The margin of error for both survey samples at the 95 percent confidence level is ± 3 percentage points. That is, if this survey were to be replicated 100 times, in 95 instances the results would be within three percentage points of the data reported here.





About The Century Council

The Century Council is a leader in the fight to eliminate drunk driving and underage drinking and promotes responsible decision making regarding alcohol. The Century Council works together with strategic partners to implement initiatives and further the outreach to fight drunk driving and stop underage drinking. For more information about The Century Council please visit www.girlsanddrinking.org or www.centurycouncil.org.

About Girl Talk

“Girl Talk is a nationally recognized student-to-student mentoring program that offers fun, positive weekly meetings, community service projects, and friendship-building activities for middle school girls. Girl Talk is started and led by high school girls who serve as mentors, and in turn, Girl Talk leaders develop leadership skills that they will carry with them throughout life. For more information about Girl Talk please visit www.desiretoinspire.org.”

Sources

1. Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G. & Schulenberg, J.E. (2008). **Monitoring the Future national results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2007**. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse.
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (November 5, 2004). **Female Youths and Delinquent Behaviors** (Office and Applied Studies). Rockville, MD.
3. National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. **Alcohol: A Woman's Health Issue**. NIH Publication No. -04-4956, Revised 2005.
4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2008). **Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drugs Use and Health: National Findings** (Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-34, DHHS Publication No. SMA 08-4343). Rockville, MD.
5. Hanna, E.Z. Hsiao-ye, Y., Dufour, M.C., et al. **The relationship of drinking and other substance abuse alone and in combination to health and behavior problems among youth ages 12-16: Findings from the Third National Health and Nutrition Survey**. Poster presented at the 23rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Research Society of Alcoholism, June 24-29, 2000, Denver, CO.
6. Donovan, J.E., “Gender differences in alcohol involvement in children and adolescents: a review of the literature,” *Women and Alcohol: Issues for Prevention Research*, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Research Monograph No. 32, Bethesda, MD, 1996.
7. Windle, M.A., “Alcohol use, suicidal behavior, and risky activities among adolescents,” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Volume 2(4), 1992.
8. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. **Alcohol and Women**. Alcohol Alert No. 10, 1990.
9. Department of Health and Human Services (1992). **Youth and Alcohol: Dangerous and Deadly Consequences** (Office of Inspector General). Washington, D.C.

Tell your daughter to check out:

www.alot2lose.org

and also:

www.desiretoinspire.org

The Century Council thanks the following organizations for their endorsement & support...



Society for Women's Health Research
www.womenshealthresearch.org



**US Women's National
Soccer Team
Players Association**



3060 Peachtree Road
Suite 2000
Atlanta, GA 30305
Phone 404 442 5605
www.desiretoinspire.org

THE
CENTURY COUNCIL
DISTILLERS FIGHTING DRUNK DRIVING & UNDERAGE DRINKING

2345 Crystal Drive
Suite 910
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone 202 637 0077
Fax 202 637 0079

www.girlsanddrinking.org
www.centurycouncil.org