

Too Much Youth & Binge Drinking

- Adolescents drink less frequently than adults but when they drink, they drink more heavily than adults.¹
- When youth between the ages 12 and 20 consume alcohol, they drink on average about five drinks per occasion about six times a month - they binge drink.¹
 - Binge Drinking is defined as five or more drinks on one occasion or five or more drinks in a row for men and four or more drinks in a row for women.¹
- Binge drinking in high school, especially among men, is strongly predictive of binge drinking in college.²
- Studies consistently show that about 80 percent of college students drink alcohol.¹
 - 40 percent engage in binge drinking
 - About 20 percent engage in frequent episodic heavy consumption which is bingeing three or more times over the past 2 weeks
- Students who binge drink are more likely to damage property, have trouble with authorities, miss class, have hangovers, and experience injuries than those who do not.²
- Nearly one out of every five teenagers (16 percent) has experienced “black out” spells where they could not remember what happened the previous evening because of heavy binge drinking.³
- Youth incur serious risks as a result of binge drinking:⁴
 - Alcohol Poisoning - Impacts the body’s involuntary reflexes including breathing and the gag reflex, allowing an individual to choke to death
 - Impaired Judgment - Alcohol reduces inhibition; intoxicated individual may not recognize risk
 - Physical Health - Binge drinkers who began drinking in high school are more likely to be overweight and have high blood pressure
 - Academic Failure - Frequent binge drinkers were eight times more likely than non-binge drinkers to miss a class and fall behind in schoolwork³
 - Alcohol dependence

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General, 2007.

² “FYI: Binge Drinking.” National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence, Inc. <http://www.ncadd.org/facts/fyibinge.html>. Retrieved April 16, 2008.

³ “Binge Drinking in Adolescents & College Students.” U.S. Department of Health & Human Services & SAMHSA’s National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/govpubs/rpo995/>. Retrieved April 16, 2008

⁴ “Binge Drinking.” Kids Health. http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/alcohol/binge_drink.html. Retrieved April 16, 2008.

