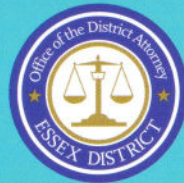


Underage Drinking

Fast Facts



Underage drinking is illegal.

The legal drinking age in Massachusetts is 21. Allowing minors access to alcohol on property that you control is dangerous and illegal. Not only can you be prosecuted criminally for hosting an underage drinking party, you also could be sued civilly, depending on the circumstances.

Despite popular belief, most young people do not drink alcohol.

Massachusetts has recently seen a decline among high school students who report drinking alcohol, and poll results show that 80% to 90% of middle school students do not drink.

Underage drinking puts teens at risk for:

- Legal consequences.
- Addiction.
- High risk behaviors (unprotected sex, other illegal drugs, criminal activity).
- Long-term or permanent brain damage.
- Social and academic problems.
- Poor emotional development.
- Victimization (assault and rape).

Teens can overdose on alcohol.

Most teenagers drink alcohol with the intent to get drunk. Teens try to accomplish this by binge drinking (too much alcohol in a short period of time). Binge drinking is a major cause of an alcohol overdose (alcohol poisoning). Alcohol poisoning can cause seizures, slowed breathing, brain damage, and even death.

Underage drinking harms the teenage brain.

Research shows that the brain does not fully develop until a person is over the age of 20. Adolescence is a highly developmental period for several areas of the brain. Drinking alcohol during this time can lead to damage in any or all of these areas:

- Hippocampus: memory, learning, spatial navigation.
- Cerebellum: coordination, balance, posture.
- Cerebrum: reasoning, planning, impulse control.
- Brain Stem: breathing, heart rate, body temperature regulation.

Get More Facts

- www.drugfree.org
- www.theantidrug.com
- www.stopalcoholabuse.gov
- www.parentsempowered.org

TALK



Need help?

If you are concerned about yourself, a friend or family member who may be using alcohol or other drugs, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline for confidential information or treatment programs 24 hours a day at 1-800-327-5050, TTY 1-617-536-5872, or visit www.helpline-online.com.

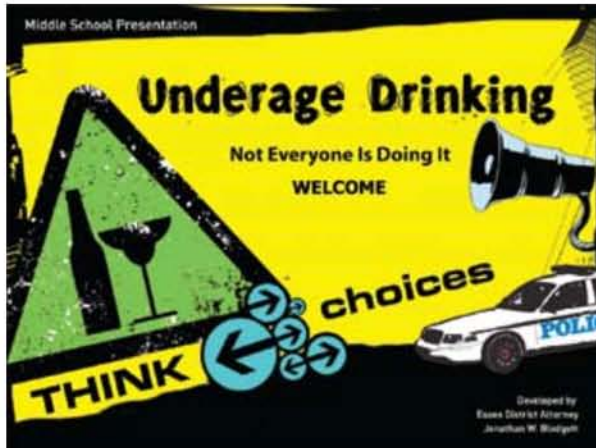
For more information on the prevention and treatment of alcohol and other drug use, visit the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health website www.state.ma.us/dph/bsas.

Underage Drinking

Not Everyone Is Doing It

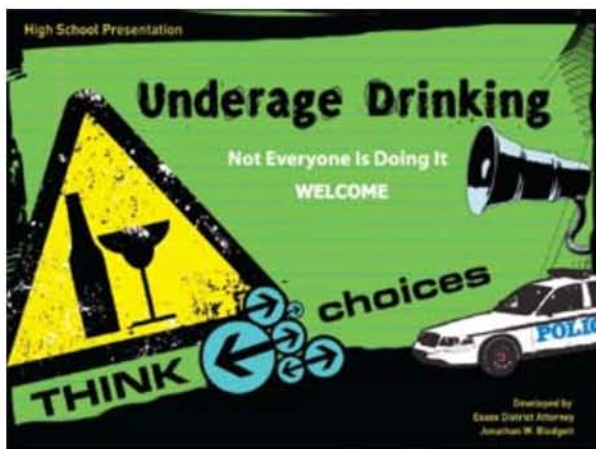


Three presentations covering the legal, social, and physical consequences of underage drinking



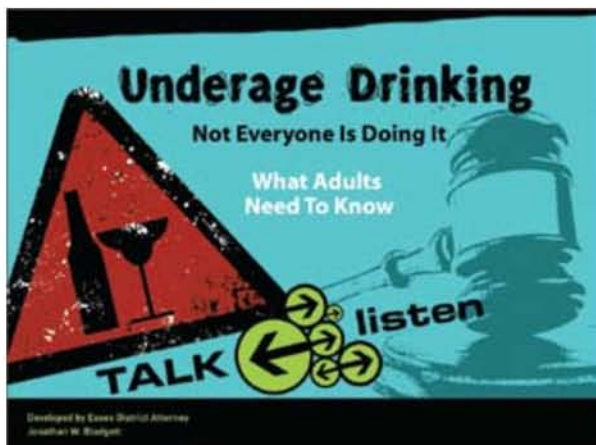
Middle School

This presentation uses a combination of slides and video to educate students on the dangers of underage drinking. Video includes teens in recovery and teens who do not drink alcohol. New findings on the damaging effects of alcohol on the adolescent brain, peer pressure, and refusal skills are also highlighted. This presentation provides middle school students with the information to make informed and healthy decisions about alcohol while encouraging them to say "No" and stand up to negative peer pressure.



High School

This version includes videos of teens in recovery and teens who do not drink alcohol. Drinking and driving, fake IDs, and house parties are some of the topics highlighted in the legal section of this presentation. Risks of underage drinking, including brain damage, victimization, and alcohol poisoning, are discussed. Students are offered refusal skills to remove themselves from risky situations and information to make healthy choices about alcohol.



What Adults Need To Know

This presentation includes videos of teens who do not drink alcohol, teens in recovery, and a parent of a recovering teen. It also discusses the "Furnishing" Statute along with house parties, reminding adults of their legal responsibility to provide youth with a safe, alcohol-free environment. Recent findings on the harmful effects of alcohol on the adolescent brain are explained along with other risks associated with underage drinking. Because adults are a powerful influence on their children, consistent and open communication is encouraged as a way to deter youth from underage drinking.

For further information, please contact: District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett's Office
Juvenile Justice Unit | Ten Federal Street | Salem MA, 01970 | (978) 745-6610