



## Alcohol and your teen

### PARENTS

Take this quick quiz and see how much you really know about alcohol and your teen.

**T F** All teenagers will drink at some point, no matter how we try to stop them.

**False.** Although underage drinking is a serious problem, 81 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 17 have chosen NOT to drink in the past year.

**T F** My son or daughter knows everything about drinking, so we don't need to talk about it.

**False.** Many teenagers have dangerous misconceptions about alcohol — for example, they don't realize wine coolers have the same alcohol content as a shot of distilled spirits, or they think they can sober up by drinking coffee or getting fresh air.

**T F** What parents say or do won't make any difference; teens only listen to their friends.

**False.** Parents can be very influential. A study of adolescents and their families conducted by the Research Institute on Addictions revealed adolescent girls and boys, regardless of race or income level, whose parents supervise their friendships and activities, are less likely to engage in problem behaviors, including drinking.

**T F** He only drinks beer. It's a phase — he'll get over it, just like I did.

**False.** Adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 or younger are four times more likely to develop problems of alcohol use and dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21 or older. Many engage in binge drinking, which is drinking five or more drinks on one occasion. Some people mistakenly believe beer and wine are light in alcohol content, when, in fact, they have the same alcohol content.

**T F** It's okay for young people to drink, just as long as they don't drive. The worst that can happen is that he'll wake up with a terrible hangover.

**False.** If you drink a lot of alcohol quickly, it can build up in your body so much you can die from alcohol poisoning within just a few hours. Also, you're more prone to injury, which can be serious or fatal. And anyone who drinks and drives could severely injure or kill someone — including themselves.

**T F** Alcohol is not such a big deal, compared with illicit drugs.

**False.** Alcohol is a factor in the three leading causes of deaths among 14- and 15-year-olds: unintentional injuries, homicides, and suicides.

**T F** Teens can't become alcoholics because they haven't been drinking long enough.

**False.** You can develop alcoholism at any age. It depends on how much and how often you drink. And heavy drinking and binge drinking by anyone can be very harmful, whether or not they're alcohol-dependent.

Source: SAMHSA, Napa County Resource Guide for Parents, and The Kentucky National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Office. For information please call (859) 293-3909.