

An Issue of Influence...

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April is Alcohol Awareness Month Youth Social Drinking = Binge Drinking



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Alcohol Awareness Month recognizes the serious problem of alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse is a pattern of drinking that results in harm to one's health, interpersonal relationships, or ability to work. Certain manifestations of alcohol abuse include failure to fulfill responsibilities at work, school or home; drinking in dangerous situations, such as while driving; legal problems associated with alcohol use; and continued drinking despite problems that are caused or worsened by drinking. Alcohol abuse can lead to alcohol dependence.

Alcoholism or alcohol dependence is a diagnosable disease characterized by several factors, including a strong craving for alcohol, continued use despite harm or personal injury, the inability to limit drinking, physical illness when drinking stops, and the need to increase the amount drunk to feel the effects.

One of the most common forms of alcohol abuse by our youth today is *binge drinking*. The generally accepted definition of binge drinking in the United States is the consumption of five or more drinks in a row by men — or four or more drinks in a row by women. Heavy binge drinking includes three or more such episodes in 2 weeks. Binge drinking is also sometimes defined as drinking alcohol solely for the purpose of intoxication.

- About 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 years in the United States is in the form of binge drinking.
- About 75% of the alcohol consumed by adults in the United States is in the form of binge drinking.

Binge drinking is associated with many problems, including but not limited to:

- Unintentional injuries (e.g., car crashes, falls, burns, drowning).
- Violence and intentional injuries (e.g., firearm injuries, sexual assault, domestic violence)
- Alcohol poisoning
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unintended pregnancy
- Children born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- High blood pressure, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases
- Liver disease
- Neurological damage
- Sexual dysfunction
- Poor control of diabetes

Simply put, binge drinking can lead to injury, addiction and even death. Due to brain development during the teen years, binge drinking can increase a teen's chances of forming an addiction by 4 times that of an adult with the same behavior. Recent science supports that brain function has potential for permanent change in how a brain is developing before the age of 25. The truth is, that due to adolescent and young adult brain growth, any use of alcohol could be considered abuse, to the body and developing mind. In addition, *alcohol poisoning* has a great potential to occur in our youth when they are binge drinking, especially when they pair the alcohol with energy drinks.

It is our responsibility to teach youth that it is their responsibility to choose what they introduce into their brain during it's developing years. The responsibility of what will remain for them when their brain has completed growth and serves them through out adulthood. It is an **Issue of Influence...**

Inside this issue:

Tips for Parents 2

Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning 2

Youth Event Calendar 2



Tips to share with your teen for Spring Events:

Be prepared.

You will run into peer pressure on prom or graduation night. Being prepared for it and having a plan on how you will respond puts you ahead of the game.

Stick to the plan!

Make a fun and safe plan for the evening and follow it. Changing your plan may make you unprepared for what you encounter.

Be a Leader.

If you stand firm to your commitment to being safe and sober. You will be surprised who follows your lead.

Stay with those you trust.

Remember not everyone makes safe choices and not everyone has your best interest at heart. Don't put yourself in a position that will make you vulnerable.

Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning

If these are present this is an
EMERGENCY!



- Dazed or in a state of mental confusion
- Loss of consciousness from which they cannot be awoken
- Vomiting (occurs when the blood level of alcohol is toxic)
- Seizures (occurs when the brain's level of alcohol is toxic)
- Slow breathing (< 8 breaths per minute—a sign of sedation)
- Irregular breathing (10 sec. or > between breaths—sedation)
- Hypothermia, bluish skin, paleness (circulation is slowing)

If you see someone experiencing the above symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Tips for Parents

Your teen needs you now just as much as ever. There are many ways to help keep your teen safe and healthy.

- **REINFORCE YOUR EXPECTATIONS.**

Throughout their high school years, you've set rules and established the consequences for breaking them. Perhaps you've loosened up on a few rules, like curfew. But be clear—drinking or drug use remains unacceptable. Being an upperclassman has privileges, but it also has *responsibilities*.

- **ENCOURAGE YOUR TEENS TO MAKE EACH MOMENT COUNT.**

Your teens only get one senior year. Let them know you don't want them to miss out on things because of bad choices, like drinking or drug use. One bad choice could change their lives forever.

- **PROVIDE SAFE ALTERNATIVES.**

Parties abound during senior year. Plan chaperoned alcohol-free parties around prom and graduation. For teens staying home during spring break, volunteering and other community activities offer a safe and productive use of their free time. Plan safe trips for spring break, don't let your child go away to an unsupervised atmosphere where potential danger could have irreversible consequences.

- **SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.**

Don't let anyone convince you that it's a good idea for teens to drink or use marijuana under your supervision. It sends the wrong message and may lead your teen to make other bad choices. Remember you are the guide for a developing brain, don't abandon your position when they need you the most!

Youth Event Calendar

Mondays at 5:30-7:00pm
at the Laporte School in the FACS
room.

Tuesdays at 4:00-5:30 pm
at the HAPA/Taskforce office in the
old Utke Hardware Building
(See below for summer schedule)

Alternative Highs

Laporte:

Black Light Dodge Ball

Saturdays May – September

The Laporte Town Hall

6-9 PM

Nevis:

Check out website for details

Park Rapids:

Rush of Fools

April 28th

Calvary Church

Doors Open 6:15-8:30pm

The Music of Eye Witness 6:30pm

Post Prom Party

Lora Lea Lanes

May 1st

Senior Slam

May 20th

Rock Sober Cookout

Rice Park

(Weather Permitting)

Tuesdays Starting May 18th

4-5:30 PM



2009 Back to School Party on Main
sponsored by
the Downtown Business Association