

INSPIRED

To Make Healthy Choices

Alcohol continues to be the drug of choice for our teens and young adults.

This is concerning because drinking alcohol before 21 years of age **causes a serious threat to the development of the adolescent brain, affecting learning, academic performance and there may be long-term negative consequences of alcohol use.** In 2014, more than 1.6 million (4.4%) people between the ages of 12 and 20 reported driving under the influence of alcohol in the past year.

A big part of the problem is that alcohol is widely available at home and friend's homes and aggressively promoted in our communities.

The latest studies show that **middle schoolers see between two to four (2-4) alcohol advertisements each day** and that when kids are exposed to advertising for a particular brand, they're more likely to drink that brand. The television was often the source, but **outdoor ads, including billboards and signs outside stores and restaurants, were even more prominent in kids' lives.** The study pointed out that local policymakers need to pay more attention to outdoor alcohol advertising to reverse this trend.

National statistics show that 10% of 9-10 year olds have already started drinking and more than 20% of underage drinkers begin drinking before they are 13 years old. Also, **92% of alcohol consumed by 12-14 year olds is while binge drinking** (having 4-5 drinks in about 2 hours).

We have made great progress in decreasing the 30 day use of alcohol and illegal drugs by Gwinnett County high school students, but need to continue our community prevention strategies and collaborations to assure that it stays this way.

In Gwinnett County, **2% of 6th grade students and 5% of 8th grade students had an alcoholic drink in the past 30 days, while 2% and 3% respectively used electronic vapor products in the last 30 days.**

The top three drugs used in the last 30 days are:

Grade	Alcohol	Electronic Vapor	Marijuana
9 th	6.1%	4%	3.9%
10 th	9%	4.5%	6.3%
11 th	10.3%	4.7%	7.5%
12 th	13.9%	6.3%	9.4%

As a community, we need to be aware that though alcohol is the number one drug used by our youth and young adults, **electronic vapor products are gaining in popularity and the usage continues to grow each year.** The use of e-cigarettes among middle and high school students continues to increase each year and the **marketing is also targeting our youth with flavors like bubble gum, chocolate and fruit loops.**

Parents are the number one reason teens and young adults do not choose to drink, smoke, use marijuana or other illicit/illegal drugs.

Do not wait to talk to your children about the negative consequences of drinking, smoking and/or using illegal drugs or prescription drugs. Elementary school age youth are already bombarded by a lot of advertising which tries to put a positive spin on the use of these **products.** **Letting them know that you disapprove of drinking and or riding with someone who has been drinking, using marijuana and/or vaping is very important and one of the best preventions** we, as a community, can continue to do to support our youth and set them up for long-term success.

For more information, go to <https://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking>

Check out <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts> to learn more

For more information:
PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING
www.guideinc.org

Girls saw 30% more alcohol ads than boys.

Most people younger than age 21 who drink report binge drinking, usually on multiple occasions.

