

INSPIRED

To Make Healthy Choices

We have made great strides in reducing the use and abuse of underage alcohol.

Usage of alcohol in the past 30 days of Gwinnett's 12th grade students decreased from 45% to 15.66% based on the 2016 Georgia Student Health Survey. Yes, it's true, **MOST** teens do **NOT** drink alcohol. It is important to note, though, that alcohol continues to be the drug of choice for our youth. And youth who drank alcohol in the past thirty days report that they receive it from parents and other adults and tend to drink the most at home and at friends' homes.

You may wonder why the focus continues to be on this if we are talking about a small number of youth who drink alcohol. A human brain takes about 23-25 years to fully develop and alcohol negatively impacts the development. The high school students who drink also report an increase in risky behaviors as seen from the 2014 Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services survey.

RISKY BEHAVIORS 2014 Survey	Youth who do not drink alcohol	Youth who drink alcohol provided by parents	Youth who drink alcohol and who took it without permission
Lied to parents about whereabouts	22%	45%	72%
Stole from a store	11%	34%	35%
Got into trouble with the police in the past year	13%	31%	57%
Skipped school	6%	40%	31%
Have been at fault in a car wreck	3%	13%	12%
Smoked cigarettes during past 30 days	5%	31%	50%
Misused Rx drugs during past 30 days	2%	28%	21%
Felt depressed, sad or empty	32%	51%	67%
Felt life was not worth living	17%	38%	57%
Hit or beat someone up	10%	48%	35%

The survey also highlights the positive protective factors and behaviors that assist high school students, who do not drink alcohol, to be more prepared to deal with everyday types of stresses while minimizing negative consequences and maximizing healthier habits.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND BEHAVIORS 2014 Survey	Youth who do not drink alcohol	Youth who drink alcohol provided by parents	Youth who drink alcohol and who took it without permission
Can talk to parents about important things	84%	63%	70%
Parents disapprove of alcohol	92%	67%	78%
Peers disapprove of alcohol use	79%	43%	58%
Get mostly As and Bs	81%	65%	72%
Perceive alcohol use is harmful	61%	36%	28%

Most teens who believe their parents would disapprove of them drinking alcohol choose NOT to drink. Research shows that when teens and young adults engage in **adult supervised drinking**, it actually results in **more overall drinking outside of the home**. Parents who talk about the risks of underage drinking, set clear rules and expectations, ensure an alcohol-free environment, monitor whereabouts and know their teen's friends and activities are taking the extra step in making sure their teen is safer and healthier.

Alcohol interferes with storing new information as memories.

A majority of sexual assaults are alcohol-related.

11% of all alcohol is consumed by 12 to 20 year olds in the US.

Most alcoholics in America began drinking before age 18.

