

Alcohol Use and Teens

Guide to Reading

● Building Vocabulary

In your notebook, use each term below in a sentence that shows its meaning.

- binge drinking (p. 279)
- minor (p. 281)

● Focusing on the Main Ideas

In this lesson, you will be able to

- **describe** reasons why some teens may choose to use alcohol.
- **explain** why alcohol is harmful to teens.
- **demonstrate** positive ways to handle difficult emotions.

● Reading Strategy

Predicting Look at the main headings, figures, and captions before you read this lesson. Predict the kinds of information you might learn from the lesson. Write down three items you think might be covered in this lesson.

Quick Write

Write a few sentences describing why you think a teen might choose to drink alcohol.

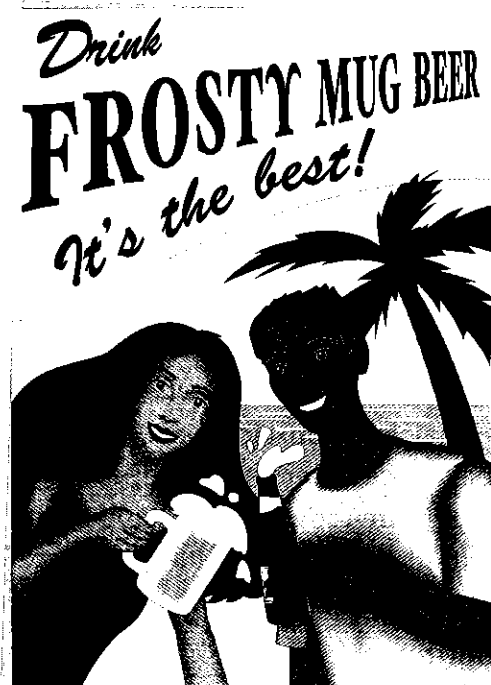
Why Do Some Teens Use Alcohol?

Studies show that most teens do not use alcohol. Then why do some teens try alcohol, even when they know it is harmful to their health and also illegal? They may try alcohol for several reasons.

One reason is curiosity. Another is that they think it will make them more popular. Some teens think that alcohol use makes them feel relaxed or more grown-up. Others use it to feel some relief from confusing or painful emotions that they don't know how to handle.

Alcohol in the Media

In television commercials or movies, using alcohol is often made to look fun and exciting. You have likely seen a commercial on television for some type of alcoholic drink. Many people who appear in the commercials look young and attractive. This is done on purpose. The



◀ Ads are designed to make products look fun and exciting. **What elements of this ad might encourage a teen to try alcohol?**

companies that make alcohol don't want people to think about or see the negative effects of their product. Because of these media images, many teens feel that drinking alcohol is okay. They also think that by drinking alcohol, they will have fun and excitement in their lives, just like the people in the ads.

Peer Pressure

"I want to be cool, too," thinks Jim. He has decided to try some alcohol, even though he really doesn't want to. He has given in to negative peer pressure, one of the main reasons why some teens use alcohol. Some teens may choose to drink in order to fit in or to not be embarrassed in front of their friends. Unfortunately, even one drink can be harmful to a teen's health. Teens run the risk of harming their health if they accept a drink. It is not always easy to say no, but negative peer pressure is not a good reason to choose alcohol.

Binge drinking

Many teens don't realize that using alcohol can kill them. Sometimes teens dare each other to drink a lot of alcohol as quickly as possible. **Binge drinking** is the consumption of several alcoholic drinks in a short period of time. Binge drinking is very dangerous. It can cause the body's systems to fail. The person may stop breathing, or his or her heart rate might fall to a dangerously low level. As you might expect, binge drinking may cause death.

Reading Check Identify What is binge drinking?

Why Is Alcohol Harmful to Teens?

You know that alcohol can be harmful to anyone. However, it is especially harmful to teens. Teens have to deal with many issues, such as the pressure to fit in with others, and strong emotions. When teens use alcohol to deal with these issues, it only makes handling them harder. It can also damage a teen's physical health.

▶ It is illegal for teens to use alcohol. **What skills are useful to avoid alcohol in a situation like this?**

Media Watch

Teens, the Media, and Alcohol

There are laws that try to prevent teens from being exposed to alcohol in the media.

Do some research to learn about laws that control how alcohol is advertised in magazines and on TV shows for teens. Then write a short report that describes what you learned.



Health Skills Activity

Stress Management

Dealing with Emotions

Dealing with difficult emotions is part of life for a teen. Rather than using alcohol, teens can use the following strategies to deal with emotions in healthful ways.

- Get enough sleep. Being well-rested can give you the energy you need to deal with difficult feelings and stress.
- Take some deep breaths. This can help you relax.
- Stay active. Physical activity can help you focus your energy and lower your stress level.
- Talk to someone you trust and respect about what you're feeling.

With a Group

Work with a group to make a brochure for your fellow classmates that describes positive ways to deal with difficult emotions. Be sure to point out the negative effects of using alcohol to deal with difficult emotions.

▼ Do you want to reach your goals? Avoid alcohol. How can using alcohol affect a teen's performance in sports?



Teens Are Still Growing

Teens' bodies are still growing and their brains are still developing. Alcohol can greatly harm the body and damage the brain. When teens use alcohol, their bodies do not grow and develop properly. They also run the risk of damaging their nervous systems.

Alcohol Can Affect Emotions

The teen years bring many emotional changes. Sometimes, teens have trouble dealing with their emotions. It is not always easy to handle anger, sadness, boredom, and other quickly changing emotions. Some teens may try alcohol, thinking it will help them deal with emotional swings. However, they will find out that alcohol may change how they feel for a little while, but it can't solve their problems.

Many people who use alcohol often feel bad about themselves. They often have trouble dealing with others. They don't yet understand that using alcohol to deal with emotions can be harmful, because people

who drink are more likely to create bigger problems for themselves in the long run. Alcohol does not relieve stress. It disrupts sleep and can create even more stress. There are better ways for teens to deal with difficult feelings. One way is to talk to an adult they trust. Another way is to find effective strategies for managing stress.

Underage Drinking Is Illegal

Aside from being harmful, alcohol use is also illegal for minors. A **minor** is a person under the age of adult rights and responsibilities. Teens who use alcohol can get into trouble with the law. If they buy or are found with alcohol, they can be arrested and fined. A minor who is caught driving while intoxicated will lose his or her license. In many states, a teen will lose the privilege to get a license until he or she is 18 or older. Also, teens who drink are more likely to use other drugs or to commit crimes.

Reading Check Name What are three legal consequences if a minor is found with alcohol?

Lesson 3 Review

After You Read

Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

What I Learned

1. **Vocabulary** Define *minor*.
2. **List** Name two reasons why some teens choose to use alcohol.
3. **Explain** Why is using alcohol an unhealthy way to deal with difficult emotions?
4. **Describe** What can happen to a minor who gets caught using alcohol?

Thinking Critically

5. **Apply** What's a healthful way for you to deal with your emotions? Give an

▲ Using alcohol is not an effective strategy for dealing with difficult emotions. What are some healthful strategies that teens can use to deal with difficult emotions?

Health Online

Visit health.glencoe.com and complete the Interactive Study Guide for Lesson 3.

Applying Health Skills

7. **Accessing Information** Do research to find some alcohol-free events that are taking place in your community. Make a list of these events and share the list with your classmates.

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