



Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Is underage drinking a serious health problem?

Underage drinking is drinking alcohol before a person turns **age 21**, which is the **minimum legal drinking age** in the United States. Underage drinking is a serious problem. Alcohol is the most commonly used substance of abuse among young people in America, and drinking when you're underage puts your health and safety at risk.

Why do teens drink?

Teens drink for a variety of reasons, including:

- *wanting to experience new things*
- *questioning adult's rules*
- *pressure from peers*
- *pressure from society & media*
- *as a way to cope with stress or other problems*
- *wanting to fit in*

Changes in the Brain

As teens mature, their brain continues to develop. The brain's final, adult wiring may not be complete until well into their **twenties**. This may help explain why young teens often act **impulsively**, not recognizing that their actions—such as drinking—can lead to serious problems.

Teens who drink run the risk of developing serious health problems, including **alcoholism**, along with other adverse consequences.



PREVIEW

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DID YOU KNOW?

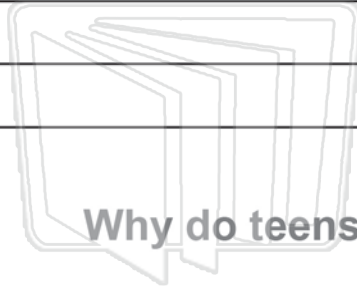
- *That according to a recent national survey, 16% of eighth graders reported drinking alcohol within the past month?*
- *That 32% of 8th graders reported drinking in the past year?*
- *That 64% of 8th graders say that alcohol is easy to get?*
- *That a recent survey shows that more girls than boys, ages 12 to 17, reported drinking alcohol?*





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