



Interagency Coordinating
Council for Prevention

Youth & Alcohol Abuse Factsheet

In Montana

- More than nearly one in ten 8th graders (7.7%), one in five 10th graders (19.8%), and one in three 12th graders (32.5%) engaged in binge drinking.²
- A period of over one and a half years separates the age of first sip of alcohol, with the first sip occurring at 13.18 years, and the first regular use of alcohol at 14.78 years. More than 1/4 of Montana youth begin drinking before age 13.²
- Montana students who used alcohol in the last 30 days are twice as likely to earn poor academic grades, Cs, Ds and Fs.³
- It is estimated underage drinking costs the citizens of Montana roughly \$200 million each year. Montana ranks 12th among the 50 states in cost per youth of underage drinking.⁴

When youth engage in underage drinking,

- The brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence [ages 12-21] and alcohol can seriously damage long- and short-term growth processes.¹
- In the maturing brain, the prefrontal area changes the most. Alcohol abuse causes severe changes to this area and can affect adult personality and behavior; this damage can be long-term and irreversible.¹
- The hippocampus involved in learning and memory suffers the most from alcohol use; youth who drank more and for longer has 10% smaller hippocampi than their non-drinking youth counterparts.¹
- Alcohol damage can cause young people to develop social problems, get into academic trouble, develop legal problems, develop physical health problems and experience failure in achieving life-long goals.¹
- Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience memory problems, physical and sexual assault, unintentional injuries, other kinds of drug abuse, and are at higher risk for suicide and homicide.⁵
- On average, alcohol is a factor in the deaths of approximately 4,700 young people in the United States per year, shortening these lives by an average of 60 years.⁷
- In 2009, 24% of 15-20 year-old drivers killed in fatal crashes had been drinking; more than 1/4 (28%) of those who died had Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .08 or above. In 2014, 17 Montana youth under 21 died in alcohol-attributable deaths and there were 9 traffic fatalities with 15-20 year-old drivers attributed to alcohol use by driver.^{5,6}
- Adults 21 and older who first use alcohol at age 14 or younger were more than 7 times as likely to be classified with alcohol dependence or abuse when compared with adults who had their first drink at age 21 or older (13.8 vs. 1.8 percent).⁸
- Studies show that parental disapproval of underage drinking is the number one reason that children choose not to drink alcohol; more than 80% of children say parents are the leading influence in their decision to drink or not.⁹

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RESOURCES

[Chemical Dependency Bureau](#), [Parent Power](#), [Talk. They Hear You](#)

- In all 56 counties of Montana, a prevention specialist is hard at work to reduce underage drinking and the associated harmful behaviors.
- The Chemical Dependency Bureau provides an up-to-date list of state approved addiction treatment centers across the state of Montana.



Citations

1. [Parent Power](http://parentpower.mt.gov/problem.shtml)
<http://parentpower.mt.gov/problem.shtml>
2. [Parent Power](http://parentpower.mt.gov/feature-story.shtml)
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5. [SAMHSA Report](http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Report-to-Congress-on-the-Prevention-and-Reduction-of-Underage-Drinking-2012/PEP12-RTCUAD)
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7. [SAMHSA Report](http://www.samhsa.gov/school-campus-health/substance-use-mental-health)
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8. [Facts on Underage Drinking](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0ahUKEwiA4MzAg8bMAhUM7WMKHdxyD1sQFgg6MAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.stopalcoholabuse.gov%2Fmedia%2Fpdf%2FUAD_fact_sheet_for_CPD_213_508.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHSgX9PIrZxUY0hmvUyQ6-SbMbwZw&bvm=bv.121421273,d.cGc)
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Resources

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<http://dphhs.mt.gov/amdd/SubstanceAbuse.aspx>
2. [Parent Power](http://parentpower.mt.gov/)
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3. [Talk. They Hear You.](http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking)
<http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking>