special edition

PREVENTION CONNECTION
NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XV: Issue 1
Underage Drinking Toolbox
Spring 2010

INSIDE

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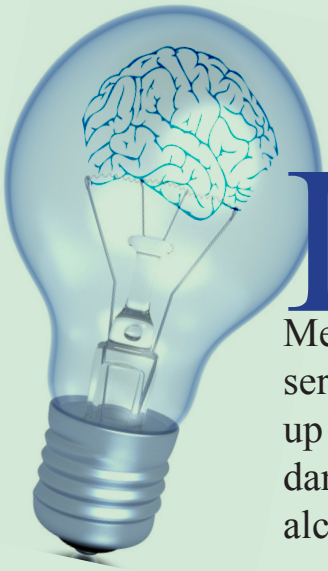
Underage drinking



Think underage drinking doesn't affect a teen's brain? Think again.

IT'S A FACT. New research shows that alcohol affects a teenager's developing brain differently than it does an adult's. Memory, learning and impulse control can be seriously impaired. The risk of addiction goes up dramatically. So talk to your kids about the dangers of alcohol and set clear rules about no alcohol use.

Know where your kids are and what they're doing.

MONTANA
Department of Public Health & Human Services

Department of Public Health and Human Services
111 North Sanders
Helena, Montana 59624
Phone: 406.444.5622

Dear Montana Parents:

The Governor asked that I communicate with you on a matter of great concern to all of us. We need your help. Studies now show that parental disapproval of underage drinking is the number one reason that children choose not to drink alcohol.

That's an important thing to remember here in Montana, because underage drinking is a serious public health concern. Alcohol remains the number one drug of abuse for Montana's youth. In fact, in 2008, results from the statewide Prevention Needs Assessment Survey of 16,911 students in grades 8, 10 and 12 revealed that 21 percent of 8th graders, 41 percent of 10th graders and 53 percent of 12th graders had used alcohol within the past 30 days. Even more frightening, more than one in ten 8th graders (11%), one in four 10th graders (25.7%) and one in three 12th graders (37%) had engaged in binge drinking. This is defined as having had five or more alcoholic drinks in a row during the past two weeks.

Binge drinking begins as early as sixth grade, and new evidence shows that underage drinking can cause permanent damage to a teen's rapidly developing brain. As a result, the need for parental involvement has never been greater.

The most effective techniques are also simple. You can set clear rules about no underage drinking, know your children's friends, where they are and who they are with and ensure that their environments are alcohol-free. It also helps to have positive interactions with your children - every day.

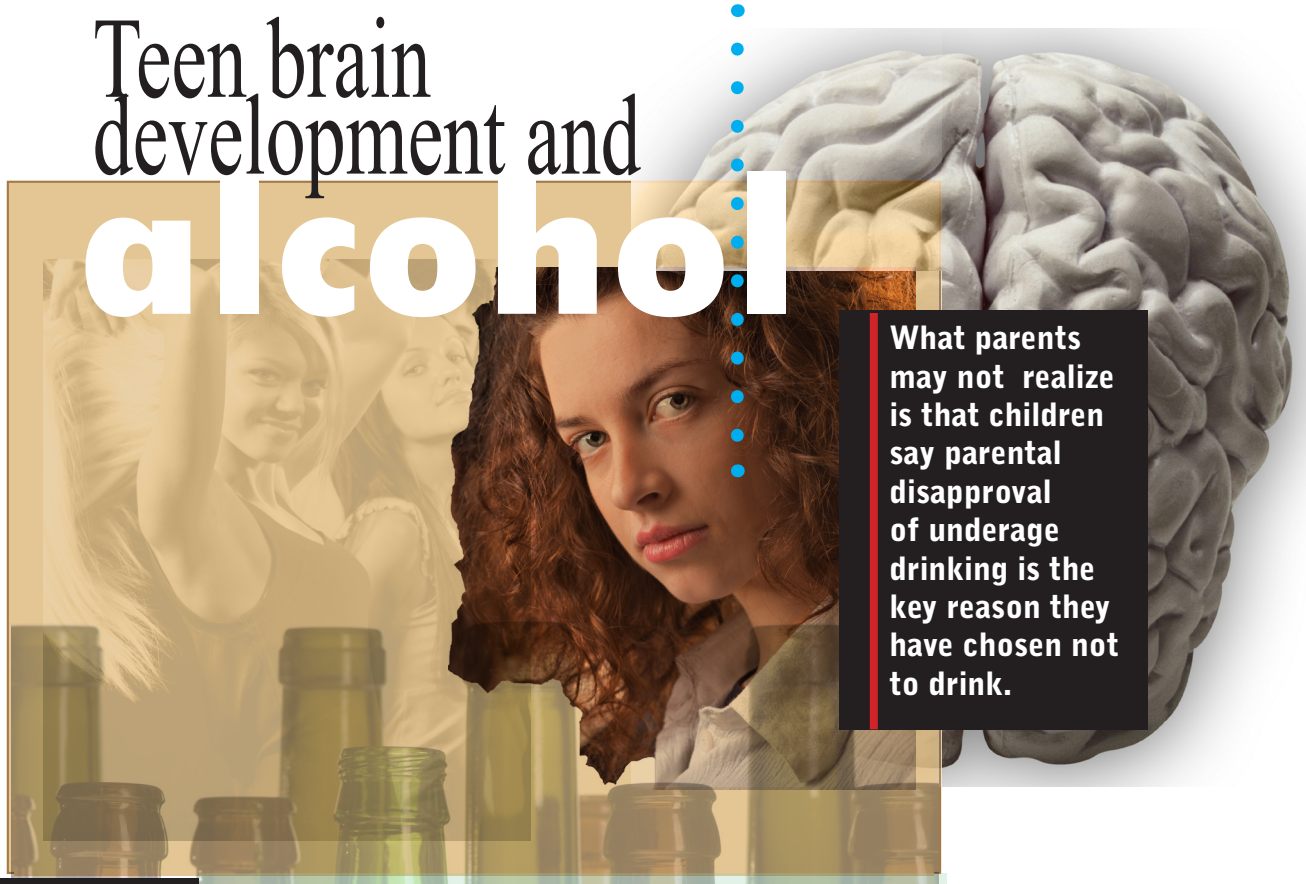
This special issue of the Prevention Connection is brought to you by the Montana Interagency Coordinating Council for State Prevention Programs. As you'll see from the rich list of resources on page 19, many agencies and organizations are playing vital roles in finding solutions that work. You, as parents, are one of the most important. Montana is urging parents to join us in the fight to protect our children from this serious health threat.

Educate yourselves about the very real dangers of underage drinking and learn the skills to prevent it. Visit www.parentpower.mt.gov today for more information. Our children deserve a bright future. So please...*start talking before they start drinking*.

I wish you - and your family - all the best.

Sincerely,
Anna Whiting Sorrell, Director

Teen brain development and alcohol



What parents may not realize is that children say parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they have chosen not to drink.

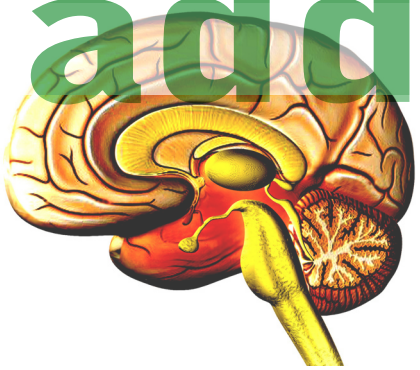
Most parents talk to their kids about drinking two years too late. Age 8 is not too early.

The brain's *hippocampus* (responsible for learning and memory) can be **10% smaller** in underage drinkers.

Alcohol affects a teen brain differently than an adult brain. It can actually cause serious damage to the still-developing adolescent brain (10-21 years).

RESEARCH NOW SHOWS that alcohol affects a developing teen brain differently than it affects an adult brain: "The brain goes through dynamic changes during adolescence, and alcohol can seriously damage long and short-term growth processes" (American Medical Association, 2003). Alcohol use can impair memory, learning, decision-making and impulse control. It also greatly increases the risk of addiction. In addition, alcohol use can cause young people to develop social problems, exercise poor judgment, get into trouble, do poorly in school and experience failure in achieving lifelong goals. To compound these problems, research shows that parents generally underestimate the extent of teen drinking and its negative consequences. Thirty-one percent of youths who said they'd been drunk in the past year were said by their parents to be nondrinkers. Others may view underage drinking as inevitable, but it isn't. To be alcohol-free, a teen needs the active involvement and help of a parent. All children need help from their parents to guide them through their teenage years. Staying bonded to parents is critical if youth are to emerge from their teens as healthy, safe, alcohol-free adults.

Increased risk of addiction



THE BRAIN REWARDS positive actions with feelings of pleasure so we want to repeat them. Dopamine, a neurotransmitter known as a "feel-good" brain chemical, connects the pleasure to the thing we enjoyed. Alcohol affects the brain's pleasure-reward system by pretending to be a neurotransmitter. It tricks the brain into generating pleasure-reward feelings from a harmful chemical rather than real experience.

If your family has a history of alcoholism, your children need to know that they are at a greater risk for problem drinking.

If a teen continues to drink, the brain changes and adapts to the presence of the alcohol and soon the teen needs more and more to create the same amount of pleasure. If a teen continues to drink, s/he will begin to crave alcohol and feel discomfort — sometimes even extreme discomfort — without it. S/he becomes addicted. Getting the next drink becomes more important than sports, grades or even family.

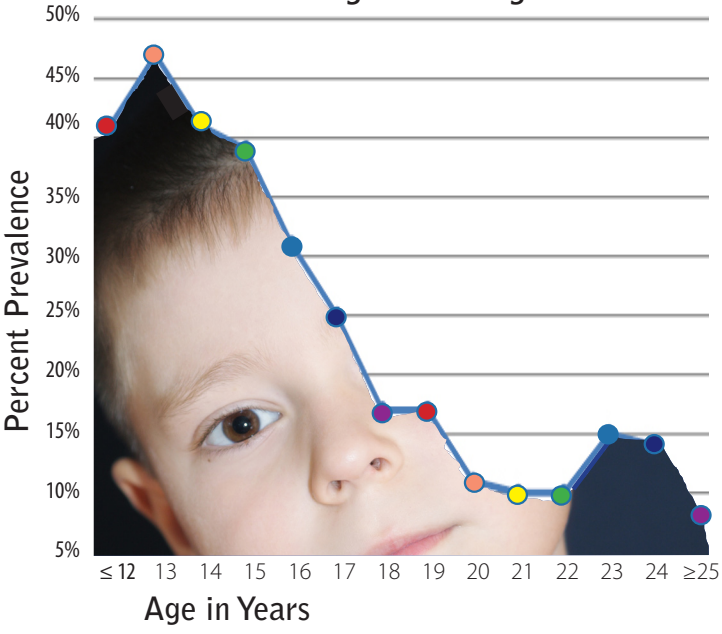
Because the teen brain produces an abundance of dopamine, it can go rapidly from liking, to wanting, to needing alcohol, programming it for alcoholism. Alcohol can also damage the brain's ability to sense pleasure from normal, healthy things and experiences — leaving a young person feeling "flat" about things s/he previously enjoyed.

A person who starts drinking at the legal age of 21 has only a 7% chance of becoming addicted.

Children who begin drinking at age 13 have a 45% chance of becoming alcohol dependent.

Alcohol dependence

Based on the Age Drinking Started



Source: *Substance Abuse in Brief:* April 2003, Volume 2, Issue 1. http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/Prevline/pdfs/SMA07-4102.pdf

parental influence on alcohol use

START TALKING

BEFORE THEY

START DRINKING

Sharing values and family history regarding alcohol will create an environment of trust and understanding.

If parents drink, they should:

Be clear that they do not want their children to drink alcohol until they are 21years old, and then in moderation.

Tell their children that some people should not drink alcoholic beverages at all. These include:

- *Children and adolescents.*
- *Individuals of any age who have a problem restricting their drinking to moderate levels.*
- *Women who are pregnant.*
- *People who plan to drive or engage in activities requiring attention or skill.*
- *People using prescription and over-the-counter medications.*

If parents don't drink, they should:

- *Explain their reasons for not drinking, whether they are religious, health-related or due to family history.*
- *Encourage children to talk about their concerns and questions about drinking.*
- *Be clear that they do not want their children to drink.*
- *Explain that when children are 21, if they decide to drink, they should do so in moderation.*

EDUCATION ALONE is not enough to deter teens from drinking as they transition to adulthood because there are many pressures and opportunities to drink. Actively involved parents have a powerful influence on a child's decision to remain alcohol-free.

Teen perceptions of parental disapproval are great deterrents. Parents may not realize that children say parental disapproval of underage drinking is the key reason they've chosen not to drink.

Research indicates that children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved in their lives and when they (and their parents) report feeling close to one another. Family conflict and lack of bonding are associated with increased risk of drinking. Mixed messages and unclear rules or expectations also leave children more vulnerable to underage drinking.

Binge drinking now begins as early as elementary school, and parents are often unaware of their child's use of alcohol.

A national survey found that 31% of kids who reported being drunk in the past year had parents who believed they were nondrinkers.

How parents can help their children remain ALCOHOL-FREE

1. **Explain the risks.** Learn and explain the risks of underage drinking. Emphasize that drinking is not a "rite of passage" but a dangerous drug for a teenage brain.
2. **Talk early and often.** In Montana, surveys indicate that some youth binge drink in the 6th grade, and a few start earlier.
3. **Set clear rules.** Set clear, specific rules about no alcohol use. "*No* underage drinking in our family."
4. **Know their friends.** Get to know your children's friends and their parents. Help them choose friends who support your family's rules.
5. **Monitor activities.** Always know where your children are, whom they're with and what they're doing. For example, say: "If there's alcohol at a party, call and I'll come get you."
6. **Make alcohol unavailable.** Ensure that alcohol is not available to your child at home or from others when your child is away.
7. **Be involved.** Promote bonding opportunities and have positive daily interactions with your child.
8. **Call home.** Studies show that children are more likely to drink between 3 and 6 P.M., while unsupervised by parents. *Give your kids a call.*

Underage **drinking**

New brain research and the effects of alcohol

The *hippocampus* (responsible for learning and memory) can be **10% smaller** in underage drinkers.

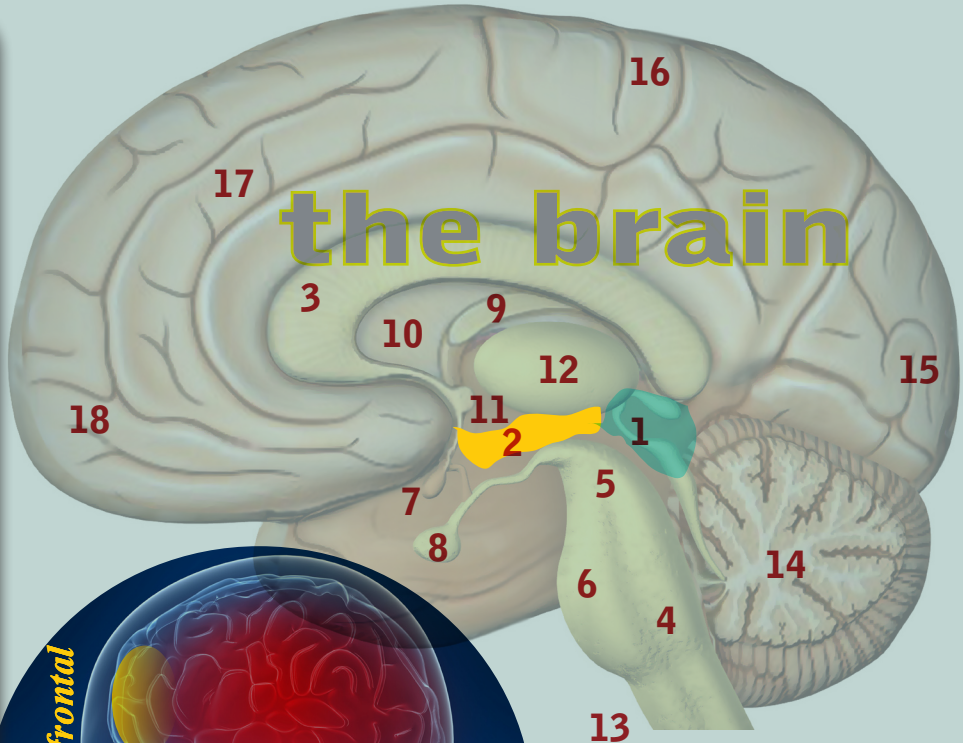
Some Montana kids begin drinking in the 6th grade. Talk to your children early about *not* drinking. Begin talking before your child is age 8.

ALCOHOL AFFECTS a teen brain differently than it affects a mature adult brain. The brain goes through rapid development and "wiring" changes between ages 12 and 21. Teen alcohol use can damage this wiring, which is essential to becoming a mature, thoughtful, responsible adult.

Alcohol can damage 2 key brain areas:

1 **The prefrontal area** (responsible for thinking, planning, good judgment, decision-making and impulse control) undergoes the most change during adolescence. Researchers found that adolescent drinking can cause severe changes in this area. . . which plays an important role in forming adult personality and behavior. Damage from alcohol at this time can be long-term and irreversible.

the brain



Brain Key	
1.	Midbrain
2.	Hippocampus
3.	Corpus collosum
4.	Medulla oblongata
5.	Brainstem
6.	Pons
7.	Olfactory bulb
8.	Pituitary gland
9.	Fornix
10.	Septum
11.	Hypothalamus
12.	Thalamus
13.	Brain Stem
14.	Cerebellum
15.	Occipital lobe
16.	Sagittal section
17.	Cerebral cortex
18.	Frontal lobe

2 **The hippocampus** (involved in learning and memory) suffers the worst alcohol-related brain damage in teens. Those who had been drinking more and for longer had significantly smaller hippocampi (10%). Additionally, short-term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more in youths than adults. Frequent drinkers may never be able to catch up in adulthood, since alcohol inhibits systems crucial for storing new information.

About the brain

THE BRAIN is the major organ of the central nervous system and the control center for all the body's voluntary and involuntary activities. It is responsible for everything we think, feel, see, say and do. The brainstem controls vital body functions, such as breathing and digestion. The cerebellum's main functions are the maintenance of posture and the coordination of body movements. The cerebrum, which consists of the right and left cerebral hemispheres, is the site of most conscious and intelligent activities.

Alcohol acts like a computer virus in the brain by:

- Slowing or shutting down brain activity.
- Deleting or distorting neural messages.
- Damaging neuro-connections.
- Hindering formation of mature brain wiring.
- Rewiring the pleasure-reward system, which can lead to alcohol dependence or addiction.

The human brain is more complex than the world's most powerful computer. It is responsible for everything we think, see, hear, feel, smell or do. It creates and directs all of our emotions. The brain is divided into different areas that direct different parts of our body. Like a complex computer, all the different parts of the brain can work at the same time – like parallel processing.

It does this through more than 100 billion brain cells called neurons. A neuron looks sort of like a tree, with "branches" called *dendrites*, a "trunk" called an axon, and "roots" called *axon terminals*. The tip of each "root" contains tiny sacks of powerful chemicals called *neurotransmitters*. At the top of the "trunk" is a tiny electrical generator called a *soma*.

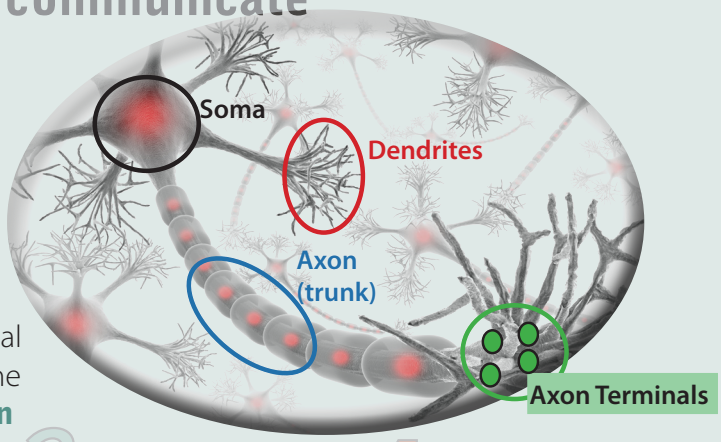
Brain neurons communicate by sending electrical and chemical messages from the "roots" of one neuron to the "branches" of another. If a thought or action is repeated often, the "roots" of one neuron send more chemical, and the receiving neuron makes more "branches" to receive it. The neural connection is strengthened until it begins to look like a bushy tree instead of a spindly tree. It becomes a dominant neural pathway.

Forty percent of our neurons are "wired" at birth. They perform automatic functions such as breathing, heart and lung functions or digestion. The other 60 percent are stimulated by learning and experiences to make connections or "wiring." When we learn new things or do new activities, new "NEURAL CONNECTIONS" are made in the brain. This is referred to as "wiring" our brain. It's like loading new software into a computer so it can do more. The more neural connections, the smarter and more capable we become.

How neurons communicate

1 **Dendrites** receive a message from the body and send it to the **soma** (electrical generator).

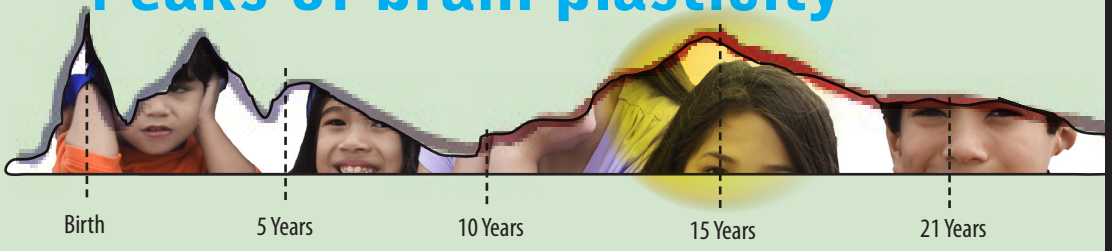
2 **Soma** sends an electrical impulse down the **axon** to the **axon terminal**.



3 **Axon terminals** give out a chemical message (neurotransmitter).

4 **Dendrite receptors** pick up the message and forward it to the **soma**, making a neural connection.

Peaks of brain plasticity



Neural plasticity refers to the ability of circuitry in the brain to physically change and grow new dendrites as a result of new learning and experiences.

Drinking alcohol during times of peak plasticity can damage brain wiring.

Brain plasticity

During peaks of plasticity, the adolescent brain is "wiring" two important brain areas: the **prefrontal cortex** (responsible for planning, decision-making, good judgment and impulse control) and the **hippocampus** (involved in memory and learning). During this period of development, the brain must make the key neural connections to wire itself in ways that result in a responsible, thoughtful adult. Alcohol, which acts as a depressant, slows down brain activity and hinders development.

"... it has become clear that, during adolescence... the brain is highly plastic and shaped by experience.... Alcohol appears to interfere with the changes in circuitry that occur during learning."

-- Dr. Aaron White, Duke University

"Teens, through their choices and actions, have the power to direct the development of their own brains."

-- Dr. Jay Giedd, Chief of Brain Imaging, National Institutes of Health

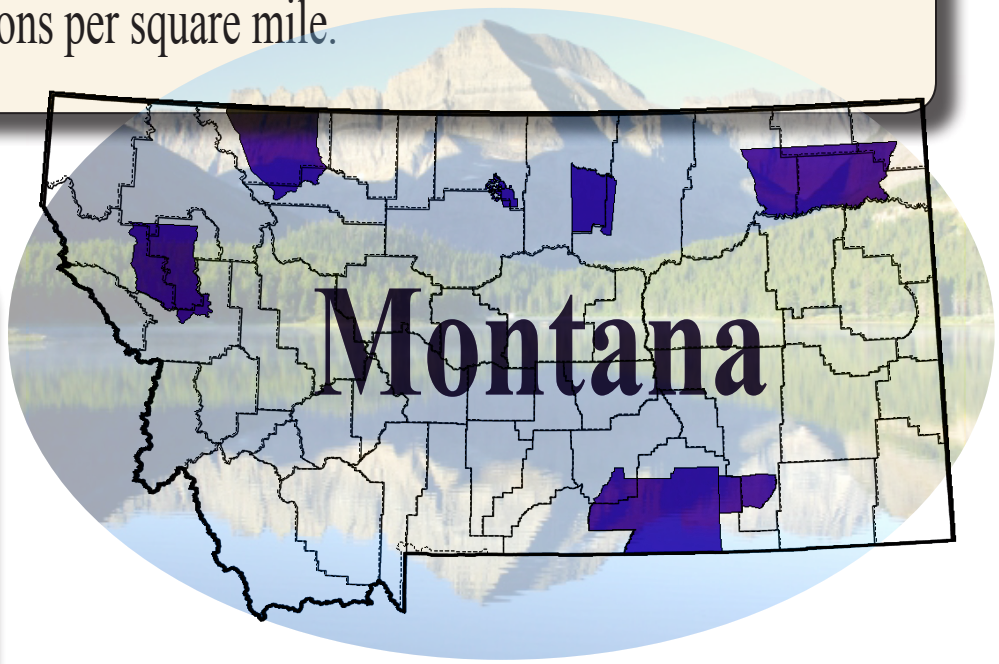
"The use of alcohol, by itself or with other drugs, can retard the normal growth and development of young people."

-- American Academy of Pediatrics: "Alcohol: Your Child and Drugs"

"In sometimes subtle and sometimes dramatic ways, underage alcohol use can sidetrack the trajectory of a child's life – or end it."

-- U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action, 2007

Montana is the fourth largest state in the nation, encompassing 147,046 square miles. It ranks 44th in the country for population size. In 2009, Montana was home to just 974,989 persons, or 6.6 persons per square mile. Montana is comprised of 56 counties and 7 American Indian Reservations. Of the state's 56 counties, 45 have fewer than 6 persons per square mile, and 22 have fewer than 1.8 persons per square mile.



In Montana, by the time teenagers graduate from high school, 85% will have had their first drink.

76% of Montana high school students have already had a drink of alcohol in their lifetime.

Source: 2009 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), http://www.opi.mt.gov/YRBS/index.html

- **According to *Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)* data, in 2007, Montana had the highest binge drinking rate in the nation.**
- **In response to the 2009 YRBS, 30% of Montana high school students reported binge drinking during the past 30 days.**
- **33% reported riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking during the past 30 days.**

Montana Prevention Needs Assessment Alcohol-related Student Responses	Grade 8			Grade 10			Grade 12		
	2004	2006	2008	2004	2006	2008	2004	2006	2008
Number of students surveyed statewide	6,207	7,165	6,227	6,688	6,223	5,810	5,684	5,206	4,874
Have had alcoholic beverages to drink (more than just a few sips)	55%	53%	49%	74%	72%	71%	85%	82%	81%
Have had alcoholic beverages (more than just a few sips) in past 30 days	24%	23%	21%	46%	41%	41%	61%	54%	53%
Have had 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row in the past two weeks (binge)	16%	13%	11%	32%	27%	26%	44%	38%	37%

Source: http://prevention.mt.gov/pna/2008/01.%20State%20Data/State%20of%20Montana%20Profile%20Report.pdf

2009 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Percentages based on responses by 1,852 Montana high school students in February 2009.

	Number of Days						
Lifetime Use	0	1 or 2	3 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 39	40 to 99	100 or more
During your life, on how many days have you had at least one drink of alcohol?	24%	13%	15%	12%	11%	12%	13%
Past Month Use	0	1 or 2	3 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 29	All 30 days
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol?	57%	20%	11%	6%	4%	1%	0.7%
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?	70%	11%	7%	6%	3%	2%	0.8%
During the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol on school property?	95%	3%	0.9%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%

Source: http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/YRBS/09/Reports/09MT_YRBSFullRpt.pdf

Access and Age of Initiation

During the past 30 days, how did you usually get the alcohol you drank?	% of Responses
I did not drink alcohol during the past 30 days	56.9%
Someone gave it to me.	16.2%
I gave someone else money to buy it for me.	13.9%
I got it some other way.	8.4%
I took it from a store or family member.	2.2%
I bought it in a store.	1.7%
I bought it at a restaurant, bar or club.	0.4%
I bought it at a public event such as a concert or sporting event.	0.3%

Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Based on 1,852 student responses: 2/2009.www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/YRBS/09/Reports/09MT_YRBSFullRpt.pdf

When I drank alcohol during the past year...

Montana Prevention Needs Assessment Alcohol-related Student Responses	Survey Year: 2008		
	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 12
Sample size*	1,993	3,381	3,382
I got it from someone I know age 21 or older	31.4%	54.1%	69.3%
I got it from someone I know under age 21	20.6%	34.1%	31.5%
Other	29.0%	25.0%	19.6%
I got it from home with my parents' permission	23.7%	17.1%	16.2%
I got it from home without my parents' permission	26.6%	22.2%	15.6%
I got it from my brother or sister	10.5%	12.8%	12.2%
A stranger bought it for me	3.6%	8.7%	10.6%
I got it from another relative	13.9%	10.6%	9.2%
I bought it myself without a fake ID	1.3%	2.6%	6.2%
I bought it myself with a fake ID	1.5%	1.7%	3.9%
I took it from a store or shop	2.9%	3.9%	2.5%

*Students were asked to choose all options that applied. Sample size reflects the number of youth who chose at least one source for obtaining alcohol. Students who marked, "I did not drink alcohol in the past year" were not included in the sample.
Source: http://prevention.mt.gov/pna/2008/01.%20State%20Data/State%20of%20Montana%20Profile%20Report.pdf

2008 Prevention Needs Assessment

Average age in years when students first...	Grade 8	Grade 10	Grade 12
...had more than a sip or two of beer, wine or hard liquor?	12.6	14.0	14.7
...began drinking alcoholic beverages regularly, that is, at least once or twice a month?	13.6	15.3	15.8

Source: http://prevention.mt.gov/pna/2008/01.%20State%20Data/State%20of%20Montana%20Profile%20Report.pdf

2009 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

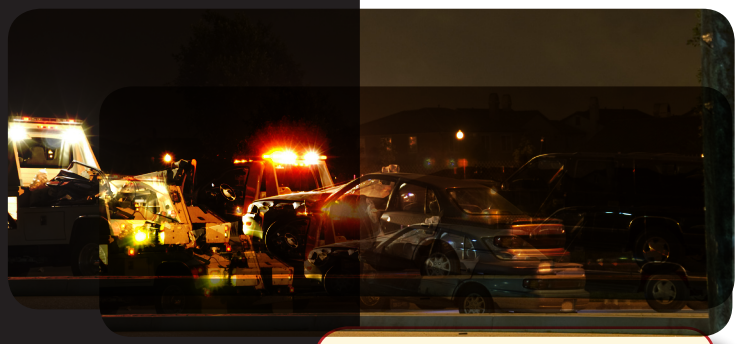
Percentages based on responses by 1,852 Montana high school students in February 2009.

	Age at First Use of Alcohol						
	Never	≤8	9 or 10	11 or 12	13 or 14	15 or 16	≥17
How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol other than a few sips?	29%	7%	6%	11%	26%	19%	2%

Source: http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/YRBS/09/Reports/09MT_YRBSFullRpt.pdf

MT Department of Transportation. http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/probid.pdf

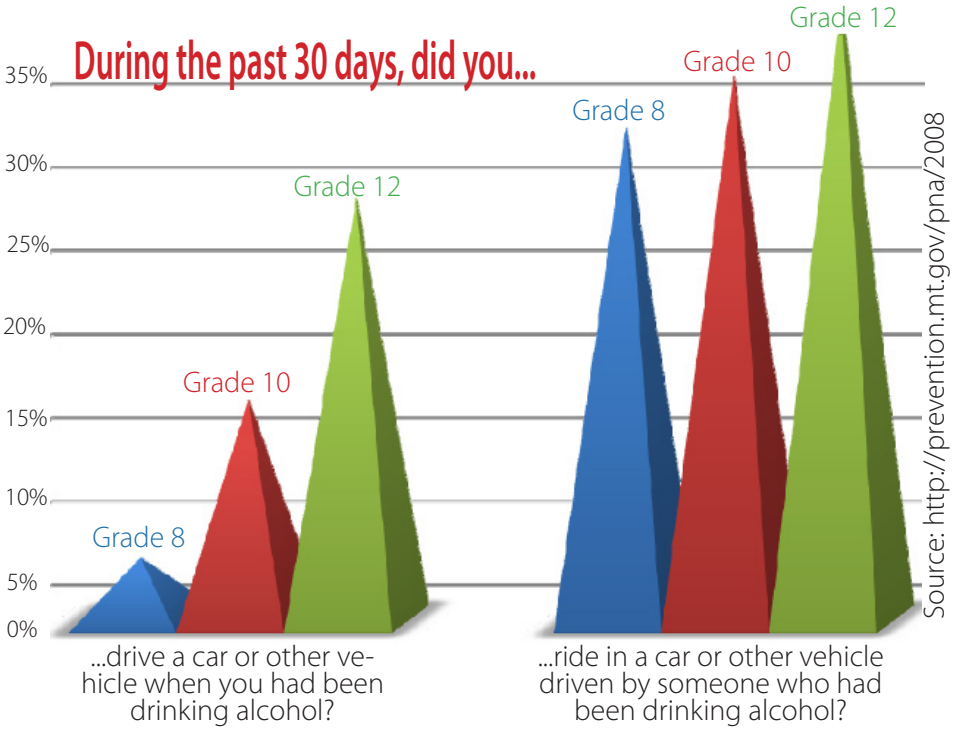
- In 2007, 1,610 youth between the ages of 15 and 19 were injured in vehicle accidents.
- 27 youth aged 15 - 19 died.
- 431 drivers under age 21 were involved in alcohol-related crashes.
- 32 young drivers were involved in fatal crashes.



During the 30 days before the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey,

- **28.8%** of Montana students had **ridden** in a car or other vehicle with someone who had been drinking alcohol...as had 35.7% of 12th graders.
- **13.5%** of Montana students had **driven** a car or other vehicle one or more times when they had been drinking alcohol.

Source: http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/YRBS/09/Reports/09MT_YRBSFullRpt.pdf



During the past 30 days, did you...

Montana Prevention Needs Assessment Alcohol-related Student Responses Sample size: In 2008, 16,911 students participated: 6,227 8th graders, 5,810 10th graders and 4,874 12th graders.	Survey Year: 2008		
	Grade 8 Yes	Grade 10 Yes	Grade 12 Yes
...drive a car or other vehicle when you had been drinking alcohol?	3.7%	13.2%	25.3%
...ride in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?	29.5%	32.6%	37.1%

Source: http://prevention.mt.gov/pna/2008/01.%20State%20Data/State%20of%20Montana%20Profile%20Report.pdf

Alcohol and *judgment*

The ***teenage brain is*** still ***developing***. Alcohol can impair the parts of the brain that control the following:

- ***Motor Coordination*** includes the ability to talk, drive and process information.
- ***Impulse Control:*** Drinking reduces inhibitions and increases the chances of doing something that a person will regret when they are sober.
- ***Memory:*** Impaired recollection (even blackouts) can occur when too much alcohol has been consumed.
- ***Judgment and Decision-making Capacity:*** Drinking may lead young people to engage in risky behaviors that can result in illness, injury or even death.

Risks associated with underage **drinking**

Alcohol use among children is strongly correlated with violence, poor academic performance and other harmful behaviors. Education alone will not keep your kids from using alcohol because there are constant pressures and opportunities to drink.

Further, the areas of the brain that encourage impulsivity and risk-taking develop early in a teen, while the areas that improve self-control don't develop until the very late teens or early twenties. You must stay actively involved as a parent in bonding with your teen, setting boundaries and monitoring to help your teen remain alcohol-free.

call home

Studies show that kids are at more likely to engage in risk behaviors between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m., when many parents are still at work. Find ways to check on your kids when you're not around, either with phone calls, text messages or by asking a neighbor or family member to drop by.

Risks associated with underage drinking...more

violence...

Children who start drinking before age 15 are ***12 times more likely to be injured*** while under the influence of alcohol and ***10 times more likely to be in a fight*** after drinking, compared with those who wait to drink until they are 21.

school...

Teens who use alcohol have higher rates of ***academic problems and poor performance*** than nondrinkers. Among 8th graders, higher truancy rates are associated with greater rates of alcohol use.

promiscuity...

Alcohol use by teens is a strong predictor of ***unprotected sexual activity*** and unwanted sexual advances.

traffic deaths...

Auto crashes are ***the number one killer*** of teens and more than 1/3 of teen traffic deaths are alcohol-related. In 2007, 431 drivers under age 21 were involved in alcohol-related crashes. In 2009, 28.8 percent of Montana high school students reported riding with a drinking driver in the past month.

alcohol poisoning

Most kids have not yet developed the "cut-off" switch that makes them go to sleep or pass out from too much drinking. They can consume dangerous amounts of alcohol before they realize it's too late. This can result in alcohol poisoning, which can cause difficulty breathing, unconsciousness and death. Binge drinking can and does kill - killing as many young people as all other drugs combined. If a young person ever passes out from drinking, call 911 for medical attention immediately.

Illicit Drug Use

More than 67% of young people who start drinking before age 15 will try an illicit drug. Children who drink are 7.5 times more likely to use any illicit drug, more than 22 times more likely to use marijuana and 50 times more likely to use cocaine than children who never drink.

Friends and peers

Help your child choose friends wisely

- Get to know your child's friends and their parents.
- Discuss your no-alcohol rules with the parents and enlist their support.
- Ensure that teens and their friends have planned activities with appropriate adult supervision.

The single most predictive risk for underage drinking is if you child's peers drink. Encourage your kids to choose friends who support your family's values and ***no-alcohol*** rules.

If there is alcohol at a party, LEAVE.
Keep your social environment alcohol-free.

Peers

Children often think that other people their age are drinking regularly.

Most **are not.**

The Law

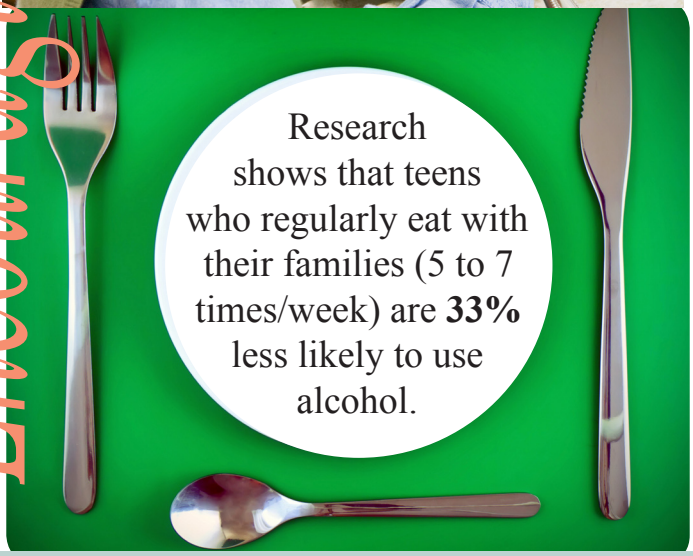
Possessing, purchasing or drinking alcohol before age 21 is illegal.

It is illegal for anyone to furnish or supply alcohol to a minor - punishable by up to a $1,000 fine and 12 months in jail.

Students with high-refusal/assertiveness skills are less likely to drink while they're underage. Find good ways to say "*no*" and practice using role-play. Some ideas are:

- *"No thanks. Drinking isn't my thing."*
- *"No thanks. I need all the brain cells I've got."*
- *"No thanks. I've only got one brain. Why would I want to trash it?"*
- *"No thanks. Drinking before your brain is developed dumbs you down."*

Encouraging news

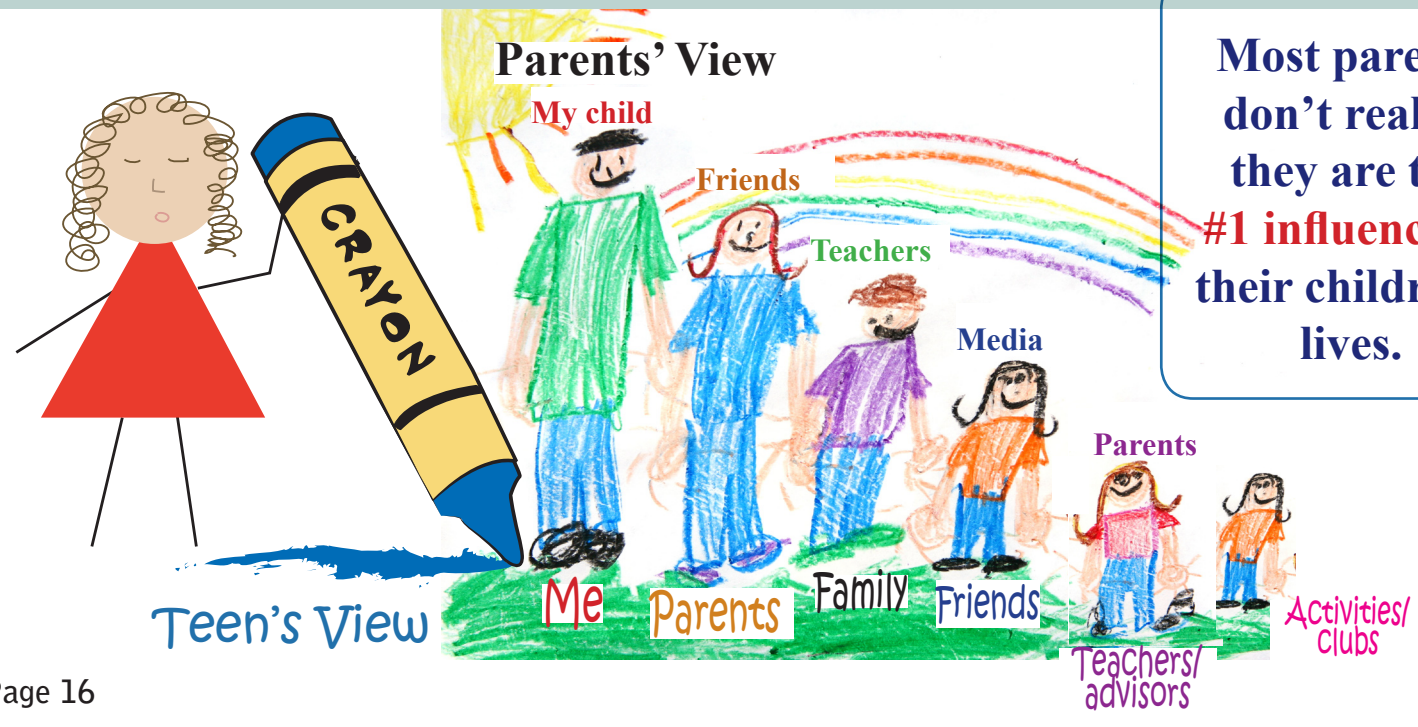


Studies show that parental disapproval is the #1 reason children choose not to drink alcohol. Empowered parents trump peer pressure. *That's encouraging news!*

The most effective parenting techniques are among the simplest, including:

- Set clear rules about ***no*** underage drinking.
- Know where your children are and whom they are with.
- Know your children's friends.
- Ensure your children's social environments are alcohol-free.
- Have positive, daily communications and interactions with your children.
- Eat dinner together.

- When parents were asked to draw the greatest influences on their teens, *they placed themselves last.*
- When teens were asked to draw the major influences in their lives, they placed their parents FIRST, before peers and activities.



Most parents don't realize they are the #1 influence in their children's lives.

You have more power over the choices your children make than you may realize.

Become a parent advocate.

We can *all* do many things to support our children in ways that help them make good choices about alcohol. In fact, every day people in communities across Montana work together to reduce youth access to alcohol, to reduce the opportunities for youth have to drink, and to provide an environment where the demand for alcohol is reduced. Some of the issues community groups are working on include:

- **Alcohol at underage parties:** When adults allow minors to drink, or when they provide alcohol to minors, they are committing a misdemeanor offense. Additionally, teenagers interpret this as permission to drink even when adults aren't around. *Adults should not allow underage drinking* in their presence, in their homes, or on their property under any circumstances. *Never purchase or provide alcohol for people under age 21.*
- **Alcohol advertising:** Americans are subjected to $4 billion in alcohol marketing each year in the form product placements and advertising on television and radio shows, internet sites and billboards targeted at youth.
- **Alcoholic energy drinks:** A new wave of "energy" drinks have hit the market that contain both alcohol and stimulants (e.g. caffeine) and which are marketed to teenagers. It can be very difficult to distinguish the beverages containing alcohol from those that do not, and the percentage of alcohol in the drinks can be as high as 11%.
- **Check IDs:** Sales clerks should check the ID of the purchaser every time alcohol is purchased.
- **Alcohol theft:** Sometimes the easiest place to get alcohol is right next to the milk in the refrigerator. Parents need to ensure that any alcohol in the home is inaccessible to young people.

Montana's Laws and Penalties

If health consequences aren't enough to convince you
that underage drinking is not a good idea, **perhaps the law will.**

A look at some of the alcohol-related laws and penalties found in Montana Codes Annotated (MCA)

For those under age 18	For those between ages 18 and 21	For those over age 21
MCA 45-5-624 FIRST OFFENSE • fined not less than $100 and not more than $300; • 20 hours of community service; • along with parents or guardians, complete and pay all costs of participation in a community-based substance abuse information course; and • driver's license lost for 30 days.	MCA 45-5-624 FIRST OFFENSE • fined not less than $100 and not more than $300; • 20 hours of community service; and • complete and pay all costs of participation in a community-based substance abuse information course.	Under MCA 16-6-305, a person is guilty of a misdemeanor if: • s/he invites a person under age 21 years into a place where alcohol is sold and treats, gives, or purchases an alcoholic beverage for the person; • permits someone else in a public place where an alcohol is sold to treat, give, or purchase alcoholic beverages for the person; or • holds out the person to be at least 21 to the owner or employee of the establishment.
SECOND OFFENSE • fined between $200 and $600; • 40 hours of community service; • along with parents or guardians, complete and pay for participation in a community-based substance abuse information course; • driver's license lost for 6 months; and • complete chemical dependency assessment and treatment, if recommended.	SECOND OFFENSE • fined between $200 and $600; • 40 hours of community service; and • complete and for participation in a community-based substance abuse information course.	• s/he fraudulently misrepresents a person's age to a dispenser of alcoholic beverages, falsely procures an identification card or alters statements included on any identification card.
THIRD OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE • fined between $300 and $900; • 60 hours of community service; • with parents or guardians, complete and pay all costs of participation in a community-based substance abuse information course; • complete a chemical dependency assessment and treatment, if recommended; • driver's license lost for 6 months.	THIRD OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE • fined between $300 and $900; • 60 hours of community service; • complete and pay for an alcohol information course at an alcohol treatment program which may, at the court's discretion and upon recommendation of a licensed addiction counselor, include alcohol or drug treatment, or both; and • at the discretion of the court, may be imprisoned in the county jail for a term not to exceed 6 months.	Those who violate these provisions are, in addition to applicable criminal penalties, subject to civil liability for damages resulting from an act committed by the person to whom the intoxicating substance was provided if the act is judicially determined to be the result of the intoxicated condition created by the violation.
• A person under 21 years of age who knowingly attempts to purchase an intoxicating substance can be fined an amount not to exceed $150 and may be ordered to perform community service.		• For more information, visit http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/MCA_toc/index.htm

Underage drinking resources

Prevention Connection Newsletter

A few great national resources

Parents: The AntiDrug
- www.theantidrug.com

Start Talking Before They Start Drinking
- www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

Zero - Nada - None - Under 21
- www.zeronadanone.com

Want more?

www.parentpower.mt.gov
- Go to *Resources*, then *Helpful Websites*

PARENT POWER: www.parentpower.mt.gov

Governor's Office: governor.mt.gov
- Governor's Office of Indian Affairs: tribalnations.mt.gov

Attorney General: www.doj.mt.gov/resources/attorneygeneral.asp
Office of Public Instruction: www.opi.mt.gov
Board of Crime Control: www.mbcc.mt.gov
Commission on Higher Education: www.mus.edu
Department of Corrections: www.cor.mt.gov
Department of Justice: www.doj.mt.gov
Department of Labor and Industry: dli.mt.gov
Department of Military Affairs: dma.mt.gov
Department of Public Health and Human Services: dphhs.mt.gov
- Addictive and Mental Disorders Division: dphhs.mt.gov/amdd
- Montana Children's Trust Fund: www.dphhs.mt.gov/cfsd/childrenstrustfund/childrenstrustfund.shtml
- Prevention Resource Center: prevention.mt.gov
- Public Health and Safety: dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD
- State-approved Treatment Programs: dphhs.mt.gov/amdd/chemicaldependencyservices

Department of Revenue: revenue.mt.gov
Department of Transportation: www.mdt.mt.gov
- DUI Taskforces: mdt.mt.gov/safety/dui_taskforces.shtml
- Respect the Cage: respectthecage.com
- SOAR - Safe on All Roads: safeonallroads.com
- Transportation Safety: mdt.mt.gov/safety/safety-initiatives/drugs-alcohol.shtml

Intergency Coordinating Council for State Prevention Programs: www.mt.gov

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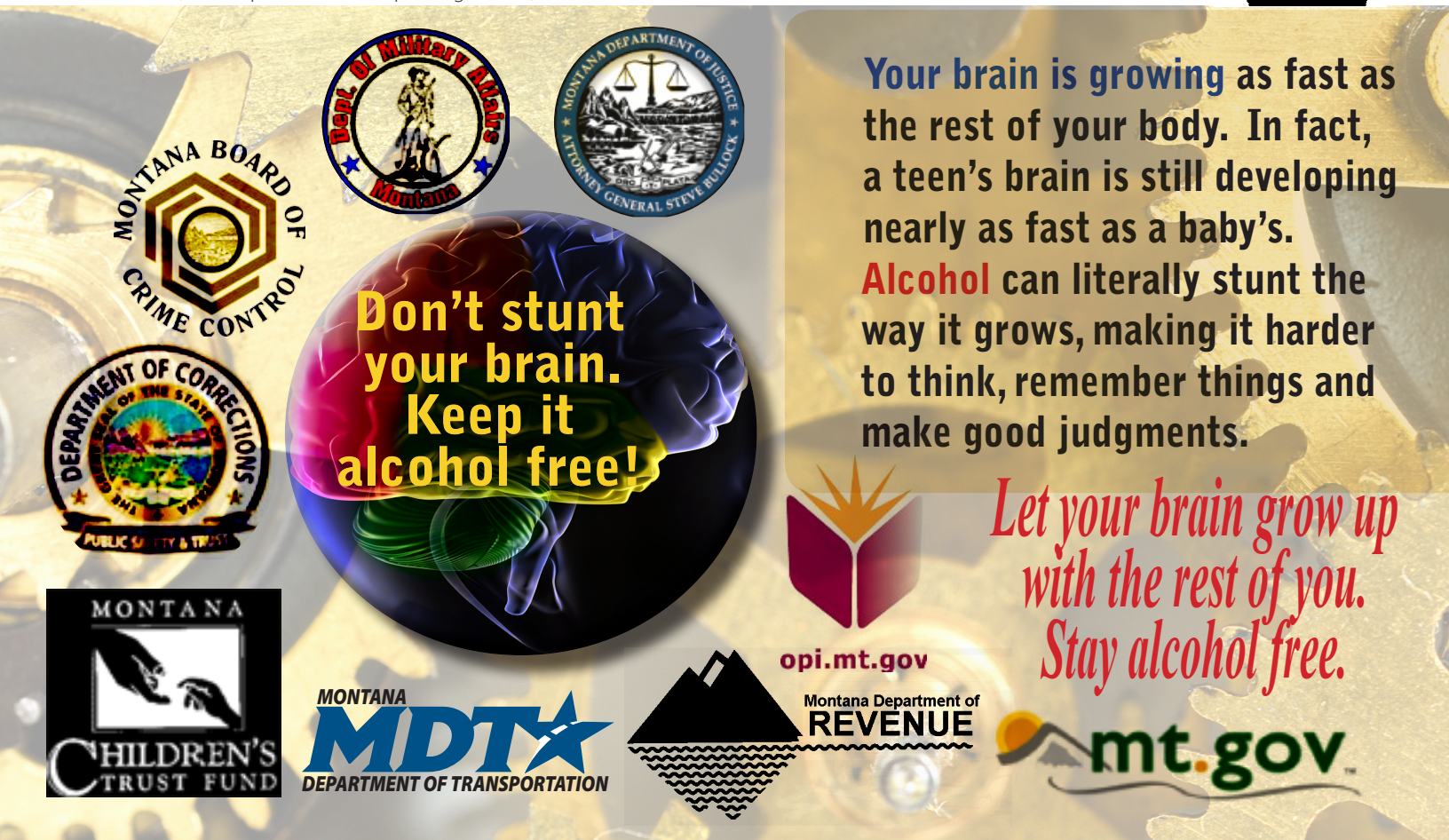
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