

## Perception vs. Fact



do you  
**REALLY  
KNOW?**



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**Teens** mistakenly perceive that their peers are drinking more than they really are.

**Parents** often perceive that they would know if their teen was using or abusing alcohol.

**Whatever** your perceptions are, it is helpful to know the facts.

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# Know the Facts

## What Maine parents believe is **not** what Maine teens think!

**P**arents play a very important role in preventing underage drinking. We know that teens who understand the dangerous effects of alcohol are less likely to drink.

We also know that teens who believe their parents are paying attention are less likely to use alcohol. Find out more and do more to protect your teen from underage drinking.

**All teens are at risk for alcohol use.**

**Do you really know?**



## What Parents Believe:

**It's someone else's kid.** Most parents underestimate the extent to which their teen is at risk. Only 26% of the parents surveyed believed their child has ever had a drink (54% of teens say they have). If you assume that it's someone else's kid who is drinking, ask yourself the question, "do you really know?" Monitor your teen's behavior, talk to them about the negative impact of alcohol on their lives.

**My teen is honest with me.** Not always. 88% of parents surveyed felt that their teens shared their thoughts with them.<sup>1</sup> But when it comes to getting the straight scoop, many kids report it differently. Keep talking and dig deeper. Encourage conversation; ask questions that require more than yes or no answers.

**I would know if they used alcohol.** 78% of Maine parents believe they would know: only 47% of the teens surveyed agreed. Trust but verify; talk to your teens before they go out and when they return home.

## What Teens Think:

**Everyone in my school drinks.** Students who report having had a drink in the last 30 days are in the minority—only 26%. Encourage your teen to question their assumptions and help them realize that everyone else isn't drinking.

**It doesn't matter, I'll be 21 soon.** It does matter. Alcohol affects teens and adults differently. Not only is it illegal, but research shows that 40% of kids who begin drinking before age 15 are likely to develop an alcohol dependence at some point in their lives.<sup>2</sup> But, that proportion drops to below 10% for those who begin drinking after age 21. It's worth the wait.

**Alcohol won't hurt me.** Alcohol hurts kids. In addition to drunk driving, alcohol is a major factor in many other types of fatal injuries including drownings, burns, falls, and alcohol poisoning from drinking too much, too fast. It makes young people more susceptible to sexual assault and unprotected sex.

Parent Data Source: 2013 Parent Survey Report (parents of Maine youth in gr: 9-12) [www.maineparents.net/Media/data\\_survey.htm](http://www.maineparents.net/Media/data_survey.htm)

Teen Data Source: 2013 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (Maine youth gr: 9-12) [www.maineparents.net/Media/data\\_survey.htm](http://www.maineparents.net/Media/data_survey.htm)

<sup>2</sup>Grant BE and Dawson DA (1997). Age at onset of alcohol use and association with DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence: Results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey. *Journal of Substance Abuse*. 9: 103 - 110.