Test Your Alcohol IQ

What do you really know about the #1 Drug Used by Teens?
Q: Which drug is most often abused by teens?

A: It’s still alcohol.

Did you know?

- Alcohol is the most commonly used drug for students from grades 7 to 12.
- Hazardous drinking is on the rise, too.
- Almost one-quarter of students in Ontario report that they’ve been a passenger with a driver who has been drinking.
- Binge drinking—having five or more drinks on one occasion—has climbed in the last five years, especially in the senior years of high school.

Teen brains are different from adult brains, mostly because they are still developing. And while this puts you in a great position to learn new things, your brain hasn’t had a lot of weighing consequences and relying on past experience to make careful decisions. Add to that the fact that alcohol clouds your judgement and lowers your inhibitions—not to mention the natural tendency some teens have to take risks—and you can see how things can get ugly.

You might start off planning to have just one drink, then maybe two, but soon find yourself doing things you’re likely to regret, like drinking too much, getting in a car with someone who’s drunk or high, or making out or having sex with someone you wouldn’t otherwise.

Q: What does alcohol do to your brain?

A: Messes with your judgement and lowers your inhibitions.

- It’s still alcohol.
- Teen brains are different from adult brains, mostly because they are still developing. And while this puts you in a great position to learn new things, your brain hasn’t had a lot of weighing consequences and relying on past experience to make careful decisions. Add to that the fact that alcohol clouds your judgement and lowers your inhibitions—not to mention the natural tendency some teens have to take risks—and you can see how things can get ugly.

According to an Ontario survey, more than a third of students in grades 11 and 12 engaged in hazardous drinking in the past year. What that means is that they found themselves drinking to the point where they couldn’t stop, where they had a hard time remembering what they did, or where they did something under the influence of alcohol that they shouldn’t have.

Hazardous drinking is on the rise, too.

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It’s no secret that some teens drink, but with all the talk about street drugs like Speed and Ecstasy, what people don’t realize is how big of a problem underage drinking still is.

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What is your Alcohol IQ?

1. Less than 10% of students surveyed report that they've gotten into a car with someone who's been drinking.
   - True
   - False

2. Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among students from grades 7 to 12.
   - True
   - False

3. Teenage brains are the same as adult brains, and alcohol affects teens and adults the same way.
   - True
   - False

4. Mixing alcohol with coffee or energy drinks will make a person more alert.
   - True
   - False

5. Mixing alcohol with pain killers poses a double risk.
   - True
   - False

6. Girls get drunk faster than guys.
   - True
   - False

7. If a person drinks too much, then vomits, it means that the alcohol has left their system and they'll be okay.
   - True
   - False

8. Binge drinking is defined as 8 or more drinks on one occasion.
   - True
   - False

9. More than a third of students in grades 11 and 12 show some signs of not being able to stop drinking when they start.
   - True
   - False

10. Girls are more likely to drink and drive.
    - True
    - False

Answer Key:

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True
9. True
10. True
**Q:** Who uses alcohol more, girls or guys?

**A:** They use it equally, but it affects them differently.

**for Girls...** When a girl or a woman drinks, the alcohol in her bloodstream typically reaches a higher level than in a guy's, even if they have similar weights and builds and both drink the exact same amount. Why? Alcohol mixes with body water, and girls generally have less body water than guys do. This means the alcohol is less diluted and, as a result, girls get drunk faster. Girls are also much more likely to experience being sexually assaulted in situations where alcohol is involved—either at the hands of their partners or through random hook-ups.

**for Guys...** Guys' bodies might process alcohol more slowly than girls' bodies do, but they're way more likely to take risks while drinking—for example, driving while drunk or getting drunk at school. They're also much more likely to become high-risk drinkers as they enter their adult years; the kind who can't control their drinking and wake up the next morning with something to regret.

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**Some Simple Alcohol Equations...**

Drinking comes with risks, especially when you overdo it or mix alcohol with other substances. Here are three equations you'll want to avoid:

**Too Much Alcohol ÷ Too Little Time = Possible Death**

When a person drinks "too much" (especially if they drink it quickly) the brain detects danger and sends a signal to the stomach to vomit—your body's way of trying to get rid of any unabsorbed alcohol. But that doesn't always solve the problem. The alcohol that's already been absorbed can act directly on the brain areas that control consciousness, breathing and heart rate, turning them off and causing a coma or even death. In other cases, a person can vomit while they're unconscious or in a deep sleep and start to choke.

**Alcohol + Other Drugs = A Recipe for Disaster**

You've seen the warnings on over-the-counter medications: "May cause drowsiness when mixed with alcohol." Well, they're not kidding! Alcohol and easy-to-get drugs like cough medicines and pain killers can combine to cause a bad reaction. It's even riskier if a person is mixing alcohol with prescription pain killers that have or haven't been prescribed for them.

**Energy Drinks + Alcohol = A Cocktail That's Cause for Concern**

Energy drinks usually make a person feel alert because they contain caffeine and other stimulants. But combining energy drinks with alcohol doesn't work quite the same way. You might feel more alert after having an energy drink—but you won't actually be. Instead of sobering you up, these drinks just produce a complicated cocktail for your brain.
Q: What should you do when it comes to alcohol?

A: Choose what feels right for you.

Option 1: Decide not to drink.

About one-fifth of grade 12 students don’t drink at all, and most only drink occasionally. By deciding that alcohol isn’t right for you—either this time, or all the time—you can keep yourself on track even when others around you are losing control. Not drinking also helps you get home safely, puts you in a position where you can help your friends get home safely and keeps you from doing things you might regret.

Option 2: Be smart about your drinking.

If you’ve decided to drink, try sticking to some hard and fast rules to keep yourself safe. Never drink quickly (no quick shots, chugging or funneling), never mix drinks with medications (your own or anyone else’s), and don’t depend on caffeine (coffee or valcohol. Being careful about how much you drink can help you stay in control, no matter what situation you’re in.