



Fact Sheet

Girls ARE Drinking and Their Moms Are Underestimating How Much

- FACT:** An estimated 4.5 million 12-17 year old girls report consuming alcohol in the past year (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2004).
- FACT:** About 39% of 9th grade girls – usually about 14 years old – report drinking in the past month (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2005).
- FACT:** Nearly 17 % of girls ages 12-20 reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past month (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005).
- FACT:** 16% of 13-15 year old girls say they drink with friends, only 5% of their mothers think their daughters are drinking (The Century Council and Teenage Research Unlimited, 2005).
- FACT:** 30% of 16-18 year olds girls say they drink with friends, only 9% of their mothers think their daughters are drinking; (The Century Council and Teenage Research Unlimited, 2005).

Background

The incidence of underage drinking remains unacceptably high among our nation's teenage girls. A new survey commissioned by The Century Council, a national not-for-profit organization funded by America's leading distilled spirits producers, found that mothers of teenage daughters underestimate and misjudge the seriousness of their daughters' underage drinking. Additionally, nearly 50% of mothers believe it is acceptable for their teenage daughters to drink alcohol under some circumstances, showing disengagement on the mother's part that underage alcohol consumption is a serious problem. Much of this is based on lack of effective communication between mothers and teenage daughters.

Mothers are the most important influence in a teenage girl's decision to drink or not to drink alcohol. In middle-school girls go to their mothers for advice on topics ranging from friends, to boys, to school; the topic of alcohol is not off limits. However, as the girls move onto high school, the lines of communication are less open. Therefore it is not too early to start talking with daughters about the dangers of underage drinking as early as age 11. Ongoing and frequent conversations about this subject should begin at ages 12 and 13, and should continue throughout the daughter's high school years and beyond as peer pressure to drink increases with age.

This communication gap between mothers and daughters can be minimized by developing tools that increase awareness, educate mothers and daughters and help facilitate conversation between mothers and daughters about the dangers of underage drinking. While it is clear that early parental intervention can significantly delay the age of first consumption among youth, often parents struggle with how to best start an effective conversation about the consequences of underage drinking with their kids.

Also important is providing girls with accurate, youth/girl oriented information to help them make the right decision when faced with making decisions about alcohol.

The Century Council in partnership with the Society for Women's Health Research and the Montgomery County Maryland Alcohol Beverage Control Board will launch a new program, *Girl Talk: Choices and Consequences of Underage Drinking*, to address this gap in knowledge and lack of effective communication between mothers and teenage daughters. The campaign will help mothers initiate and sustain conversations about alcohol.

The comprehensive program, which will be developed over the course of the next year, will be tailored specifically for mothers and daughters and will include:

- **A website, www.girltalk.org**, for mothers and daughters with additional information on how to have the underage drinking conversation and links to additional national and local resources related to underage drinking.
- **Booklets for mothers**, detailing how to begin the conversation, sustain the conversation and have an impact as well as information explaining the facts about alcohol, and addressing issues such as peer pressure and creative ways to say "no" to drinking.
- **A partnership with The N, a Nickelodeon network** to further build public awareness among young women about the dangers of underage drinking.

The Century Council

The Century Council's mission is to promote responsible decision-making regarding drinking or non-drinking of beverage alcohol and to discourage all forms of irresponsible consumption through education, communications, research, law enforcement, and other programs. Recognizing nearly fifteen years of progress, America's leading distillers have promoted The Council's mission by investing over \$150 million in its programs to fight drunk driving and underage drinking. For more information about *Girl Talk* or The Century Council, please visit www.girltalk.org or www.centurycouncil.org.

The Society for Womens' Health Research

The Society for Women's Health Research is the nation's only non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health of all women through research, education and advocacy. Founded in 1990, the Society brought to national attention the need for the appropriate inclusion of women in major medical research studies and the need for more information about conditions affecting women disproportionately, predominately, or differently than men. The Society advocates increased funding for research on women's health; encourages the study of sex differences that may affect the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease; promotes the inclusion of women in medical research studies; and informs women, providers, policy makers and media about contemporary women's health issues. Visit the Society's Web site at www.womenshealthresearch.org for more information.

Montgomery County Alcohol Beverage Control Board

The Montgomery County Hospitality Resource Panel (MC HRP) was established in the Spring of 2000 through grant funding obtained by Montgomery County Health and Human Resources and from grant funding obtained by the Department of Liquor Control from the National Alcoholic Beverages Control Association. Run by Community Outreach Manager Kathie Durbin, the MC HRP is modeled after a process developed by the Responsible Hospitality Institute, and is a community organizing framework for creating an alliance of businesses, associations, agencies, educators and suppliers dedicated to developing safe communities and healthy businesses through the promotion of responsible hospitality principles and practices. Visit the MC HRP website for more information: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dlotmpl.asp?url=/Content/DLC/Liquor/Community/MCHRP.asp.

US Women's National Soccer Team Player's Association

The US Women's National Soccer Team Players' Association was created after the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup to represent all the players that comprise the US Women's National Soccer Team, and give the US Soccer Federation the assurance that the new Uniform Player Agreement and Collective Bargaining Agreement would govern its relationship with the players through the 2004 Olympics. The Association has primarily functioned as a representation and negotiating body, and is now making greater efforts to promote its constituent players. More information can be found at: www.unitedsoccerathletes.com and www.ponytailposse.com.

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