

Special
Reprint
Edition

TEACHERS.
THE ANTI-DRUG.



As seen in



News

Reprinted from USA TODAY 2002

Girls are drinking like boys

Teens' alcohol use now nearly equal

By Karen Thomas
USA TODAY

Teenage girls are almost as likely to drink alcohol as teen boys are, closing a generations-old gender gap, a study released Tuesday says.

An analysis of national data by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) finds overall alcohol use among teens involves 48% of girls and 52% of boys. Tenth-grade girls who binge drink (five or more drinks in a row) reached 31% in 1999; 34% of boys that age are binge drinkers.

The gender gap disappears entirely among ninth-graders: 40% of boys drink vs. 41% of girls; 22% of boys binge vs. 20% of girls.

"We found that . . . girls want to be one of the boys, so they go drink-for-drink with

them," says CASA President Joseph Califano. "Also, girls are under enormous pressure to have sex, and alcohol is a big disinhibitor."

Experts say alcohol is more problematic for women, who metabolize it more slowly and become intoxicated more quickly than men. They also tend to become alcohol-dependent faster.

The report says underage drinking accounts for one-fourth of all alcohol consumed in the USA, a figure hotly disputed Tuesday.

The conclusions are "absolutely, statistically wrong," says Peter Cressy, president of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. Late Tuesday, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, whose data CASA used, said underage drinking accounts for 11.4% of consumption.

CASA is calling for stricter alcohol policies and a campaign against underage drinking financed by the alcohol indus-

try. Cressy says the industry has spent \$120 million in the past 10 years to counter underage drinking.

Among adults polled by CASA:

- ▶ 86% want restrictions on home delivery of alcohol.
- ▶ 74% support restrictions on alcohol advertising.
- ▶ 76% say parents should be held legally responsible for teen drinking.

APPLICATIONS:

health & behavior, social studies, knowledge, polling, analysis

STANDARDS:

NPH-H.5-8.3

Reducing Health Risks

Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.

NPH-H.5-8.4

Influences on Health

Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.

NPH-H.5-8.5

Using Communication Skills to Promote Health

Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.

Source: Education World

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

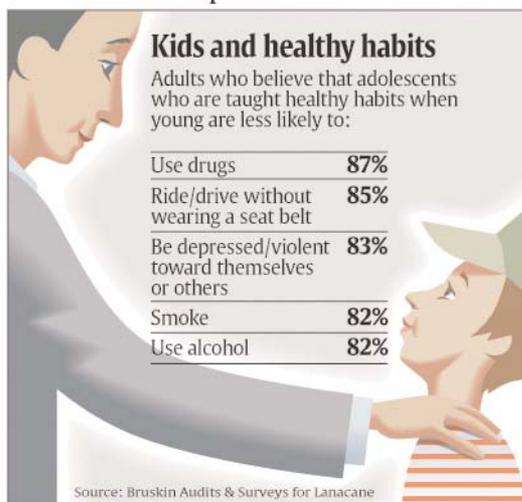
What percentage of ninth-grade girls admit to having tried alcohol? Why is alcohol "far more problematic for women" than men? What percent of alcohol is consumed by underage drinkers? What constitutes "binge" drinking? According to Duke professor Wilkie Wilson, what type of environment are kids trying to create when they use alcohol and drugs, such as Ecstasy? Do you agree?

Have you ever been pressured to try alcohol? If so, how did you respond? Share your concerns about alcohol use and underage drinking with your parents. If you find it difficult to talk to your parents, try talking to an aunt, uncle or other relative.

ACTIVITY:

Conduct a poll of 10 adults and 10 students in your community that poses the following questions: 1.) Do you think teenage girls are more, less or as likely to try alcohol as teenage boys? 2.) Should parents be held legally responsible for teen drinking? 3.) Are tougher underage drinking laws needed in your state? 4.) Are underage drinkers likely to become problem drinkers as adults? Compile the results of your polls, and create a USA TODAY-style Snapshot that compares the data. Do adults and teens have the same attitudes toward alcohol and underage drinking? Finally, discuss your poll findings in class.

USA TODAY Snapshots®



By Cindy Hall and Sam Ward, USA TODAY

APPLICATIONS: *health, social studies, knowledge, analysis, evaluation*

In your opinion, do adults have an accurate perception of the influence they have on children's behavior? What constitutes a healthy habit? An un-healthy one?

Under what circumstances do adolescents begin to use drugs, alcohol and tobacco products? How might they be influenced by their family members and friends who smoke, drink or use drugs, or by TV shows and movies that feature

characters who use/abuse these substances?

Smoking causes emphysema, heart disease, lung cancer and a whole host of other illnesses. It also stains teeth and causes unpleasant odors. Plus, it's expensive! Alcohol and drug abuse can cause permanent liver, kidney, heart and brain damage, while harming other organs. How can this message be more positively and effectively sent to teens?