

## STATISTICS ABOUT ALCOHOL USE

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In 2007, the average age at first alcohol use among recent initiates aged 12 to 49 was 16.8 years, similar to the corresponding 2006 estimate (16.6 years).

Young adults aged 18 to 22 enrolled full-time in college were more likely than their peers not enrolled full-time to use alcohol in the past month, binge drink, and drink heavily. Past month alcohol use was reported by 66.4 percent of full-time college students compared with 54.1 percent of persons aged 18 to 22 who were not enrolled full-time. Binge and heavy use rates for college students were 45.5 and 19.0 percent, respectively, compared with 38.4 and 13.3 percent, respectively, for 18 to 22 year olds not enrolled full-time in college.

Students who attended schools with high rates of heavy drinking experienced a greater number of secondhand effects, including disruption of sleep or studies, property damage, and verbal, physical, or sexual violence.

Underage alcohol use is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined.

High school students who use alcohol or other substances are five times more likely than other students to drop out of school or to believe that earning good grades is not important.

Of the 306 children 0-14 years old who were killed in alcohol-related crashes during 2006, half (153) of those killed were passengers in vehicles with drivers who had been drinking.

Underage drinkers are susceptible to immediate consequences of alcohol use, including blackouts, hangovers, and alcohol poisoning and are at elevated risk of neurodegeneration (particularly in regions of the brain responsible for learning and memory), impairments in functional brain activity, and the appearance of neurocognitive defects. Heavy episodic or binge drinking impairs study habits and erodes the development of transitional skills to adulthood.