

# PARENTS: HELP YOUR TEENS PARTY RIGHT AT GRADUATION

## GRADUATION...

Graduation is a time to celebrate. But before your graduates party, take the time to talk with them about alcohol—it just may save a life.

## IT'S ABOUT YOUR TEEN...

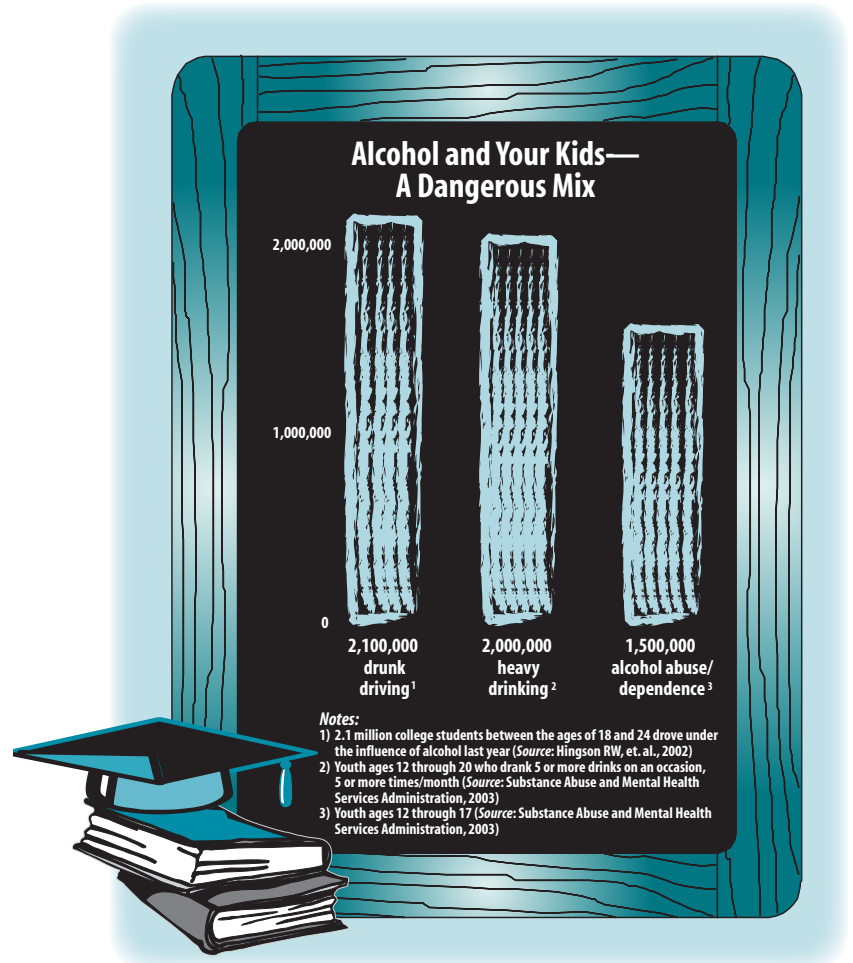
A teenager's brain is still developing and it is very sensitive to alcohol's effects on judgment and decision-making.

## ALCOHOL CAN BE TRICKY...

If your graduates drink, they may temporarily feel elated and happy, but they should not be fooled. Ask them to consider these risks:

- Their inhibitions and memory soon become affected—so they may say and do things that they will regret and possibly will not remember doing at all.
- Their decision-making skills are also affected. They may become restless and aggressive. They may be more at risk for having an alcohol-related traffic crash, getting into fights, trashing a house, or making unwise decisions about sex.

Then there is what happens to their physical control—loss of balance, slurred speech, and blurred vision. Normal activities—even crossing a busy intersection—can become truly dangerous.



## TOO MUCH ALCOHOL BECOMES A DEADLY POISON...

If your graduates drink enough, they will eventually get sleepy and pass out. Reflexes like gagging and breathing can be suppressed. That means they could vomit and choke to death or just stop breathing. They may even be at risk for alcohol poisoning.

## THINK ABOUT IT!

If graduates drink too much, it can mean trips to the emergency room, arrests, and sexual assaults. They could put themselves and their friends in real danger. Ask them to consider this: Is that any way to celebrate?

## TALK WITH YOUR GRADUATE...

Research shows that parents do make a difference. Talking with your graduate about alcohol now could prevent serious problems later.

## REMEMBER...

Tell your graduate to play it safe and party right at graduation.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)



## A WORD ABOUT ALCOHOL POISONING...

Before the celebrations begin, take a few minutes to talk with your graduate about the dangers of alcohol poisoning.

**What Is It?** Alcohol depresses nerves that control involuntary actions such as breathing and the gag reflex, which prevents choking. Someone who drinks a fatal dose of alcohol will eventually stop breathing. Even if someone survives an alcohol overdose, he or she can suffer irreversible brain damage. Rapid binge drinking (which often happens on a bet or a dare) is especially dangerous because the victim can drink a fatal dose **before** losing consciousness.

A person's blood alcohol concentration can continue to rise even while he or she is passed out. Even after someone stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach and intestine continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. A person who appears to be sleeping it off may be in real danger.

**What Should I Look For?** Critical signs of alcohol poisoning include mental confusion, stupor, coma, or the person cannot be roused; vomiting; seizures; slow (fewer than eight breaths per minute) or irregular (10 seconds or more between breaths) breathing; and hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, and paleness.

**What Should I Do?** Know the danger signals. If you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning, don't wait for all the critical signs to be present. If you suspect an alcohol overdose, call 911 immediately for help.