

# APRIL IS NATIONAL ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

“Alcohol and drug use is a very risky business for young people, and parents can make a difference. The longer children delay drinking and drug use, the less likely they are to develop any problems associated with it. That’s why it is so important to help your child connect the dots and make smart decisions about alcohol and drugs.”

~Andrew Pucher, President and CEO of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

In 1987, The NDADD established April as “National Alcohol Awareness Month” in an effort to highlight the dangers of alcohol abuse and the consequences of underage drinking.

## STATISTICS TELL THE TALE



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, alcohol is the most commonly-abused addictive substance among American youth. Within the past month:

- 1 out of every 3 American high school students have drunk alcohol at least once.
- Almost 1 in 5 have engaged in dangerous binge-drinking.
- 8% consumed alcohol and then drove.
- 20% accepted a ride from someone else who had been drinking.
- Over 4300 underage youths die every year due to excessive drinking.
- Annually, alcohol-related causes result in more than 189,000 Emergency Room visits by youths.



## YOUR BEHAVIOR SETS THE STANDARD

In addition, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports that 10% of US children live with a parent with a drinking problem. Why is this important in the fight to curb teen drinking? Children of alcoholic parents are 4 times more likely to BECOME alcoholics.

That is why the theme of the 31st Annual Awareness Month is “Connecting the Dots: Opportunities for Recovery”. The observance kicks off with Alcohol-Free Weekend, March 30 through April 2. People everywhere are encouraged to VOLUNTARILY abstain from drinking during this time. Participating in this three-day event provides several benefits:

- It raises awareness by inviting dialogue.
- It demonstrates to your children that it is possible to have fun without alcohol.
- It identifies potential problems. If you or members of your family find it overly-difficult or uncomfortable to give up alcohol over the weekend, it may be time to reevaluate your relationship with alcohol.

If that is the case, then the best time to get help is ALWAYS RIGHT NOW. Alcoholism is a progressive disease that always gets worse, and, if left untreated, is almost invariably fatal.

## SIGNS OF TEENAGE ALCOHOL ABUSE

It is unlikely that your teen will volunteer the fact that they are experimenting with or abusing alcohol. It is up to you, as a responsible parent, to watch for any warning signs:

- Uncharacteristically bad grades
- Poor attendance – cutting class, “too sick”, etc.
- Quitting sports or extracurricular activities
- Loss of motivation
- Mood swings
- New friends
- Secretive behavior – Locked room, delays in answering, etc.
- Unaccounted time
- Changes in appearance
- Hostility
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Money or valuables missing from the home
- Physical evidence –beer, wine, or liquor bottles
- Actually seeing them drunk or impaired



“Experimenting” is still a cause for concern. The brain is still developing during the teen and young adult years, so alcohol can have long-term effects on normal brain function. These effects can last into adulthood.

If your teen is using or abusing alcohol, the best thing you can do for them and their future is to get them specialized professional treatment that addresses their unique needs—teen recovery is different from adult recovery, and one size definitely does not fit all.

For over 35 years, Teensavers has been providing residential rehab and outpatient recovery services to troubled teenagers. It IS possible transform your teen’s life for the better. If you need help, contact us today to discuss your situation.