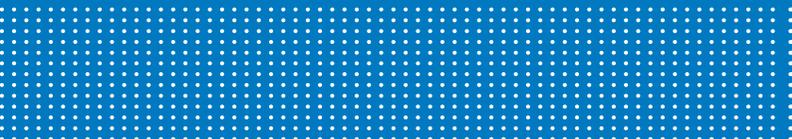


# HEALTH SAFETY CHOOSE

## LEARN ALCOHOL BASICS

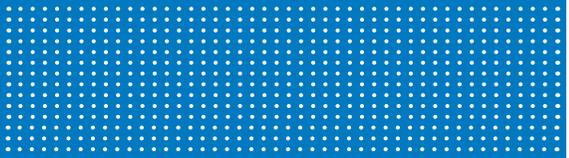
Information for **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**



Virginia Department of  
Alcoholic Beverage Control  
**Education and Prevention**  
**Publication Series**



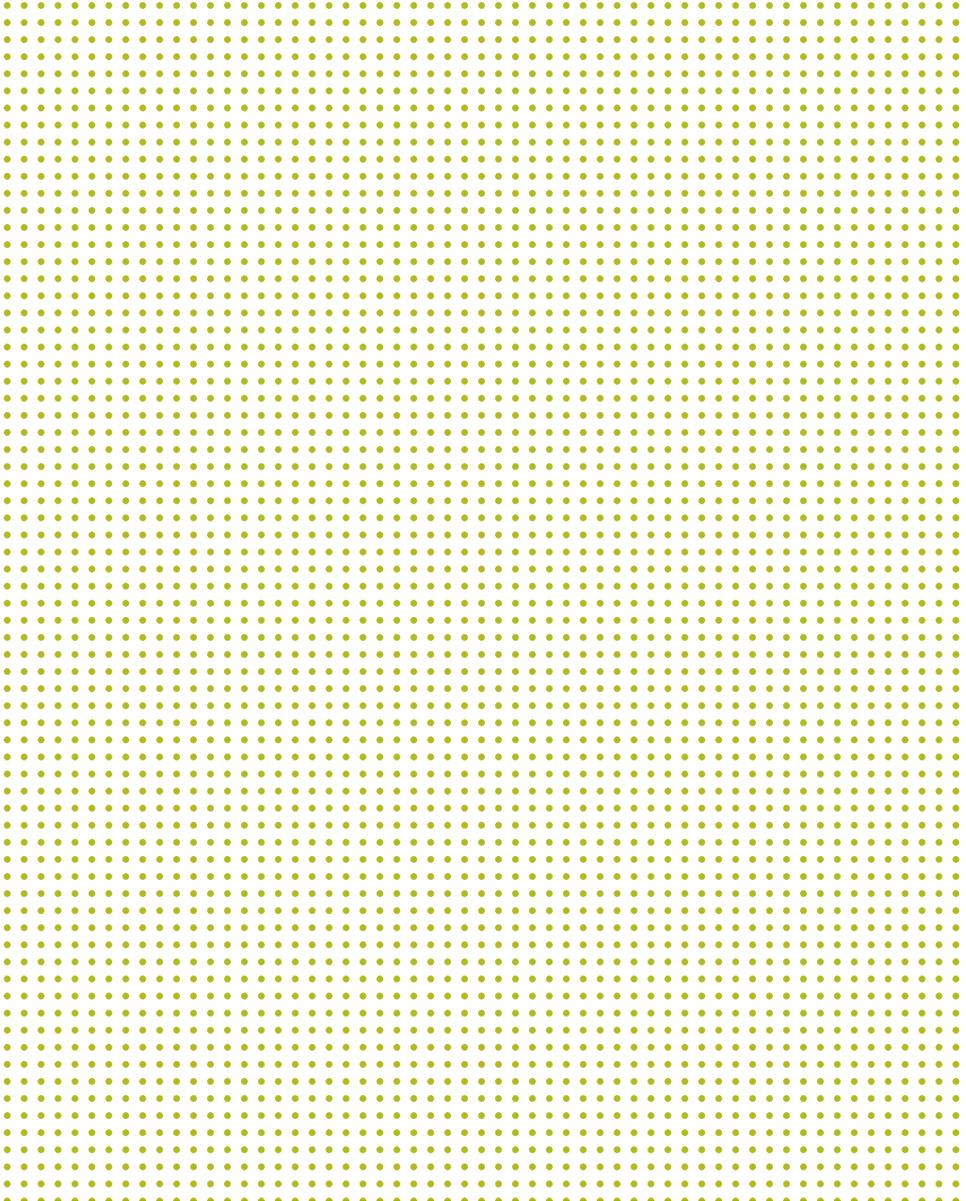
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# INTRODUCTION

You can be a leader and a role model for your friends by making healthy choices and knowing the facts about alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and drug abuse can affect your body, brain and future. It's dangerous and illegal to use alcohol before turning 21. Learn how to say "no" and become a leader among your friends!



# DO YOU KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL?

## IT IS AGAINST THE LAW

In Virginia, it is illegal for you to purchase, have or drink alcohol if you are younger than 21. Penalties for disobeying the law include community service, fines and possible jail time.



## VIRGINIA IS A CONTROL STATE

A control state regulates and monitors the supply and sale of beer, wine and liquor. This helps keep everyone in your community safe.



## ALCOHOL ISN'T JUST SOLD AT A VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (VIRGINIA ABC) STORE

Beer, wine and liquor are all beverages that are illegal for people younger than 21 to drink or possess. Some of these beverages can be found at local stores, have brightly colored labels and even look like energy drinks. Don't drink anything you don't recognize.

## ALCOHOL SLOWS YOU DOWN

Alcohol is a depressant which means that it slows down your entire body. It affects the part of the brain that controls your muscles, judgment, thinking, speech, respiratory and circulatory systems. This is why people should not drink and drive as it puts them and everyone else in danger.



## ALCOHOL CAN KILL



Alcohol poisoning is when a large amount of alcohol in the bloodstream causes the body and its major functioning organs, such as the brain, to shut down. It can cause breathing difficulties, vomiting or even death. Alcohol poisoning kills six people in the United States each day!

## EVEN SMALL DRINKS ARE HARMFUL



Alcohol served in smaller glasses doesn't make the drink less harmful. Some drinks are small but strong. They may also be colorful and sweet smelling, but if they contain alcohol, they are dangerous for you.

# HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR FUTURE?



Making the choice to drink before you are 21 can affect your future goals. Whether it's performing on stage or scoring the winning goal, alcohol and drugs can prevent you from making your dreams a reality.

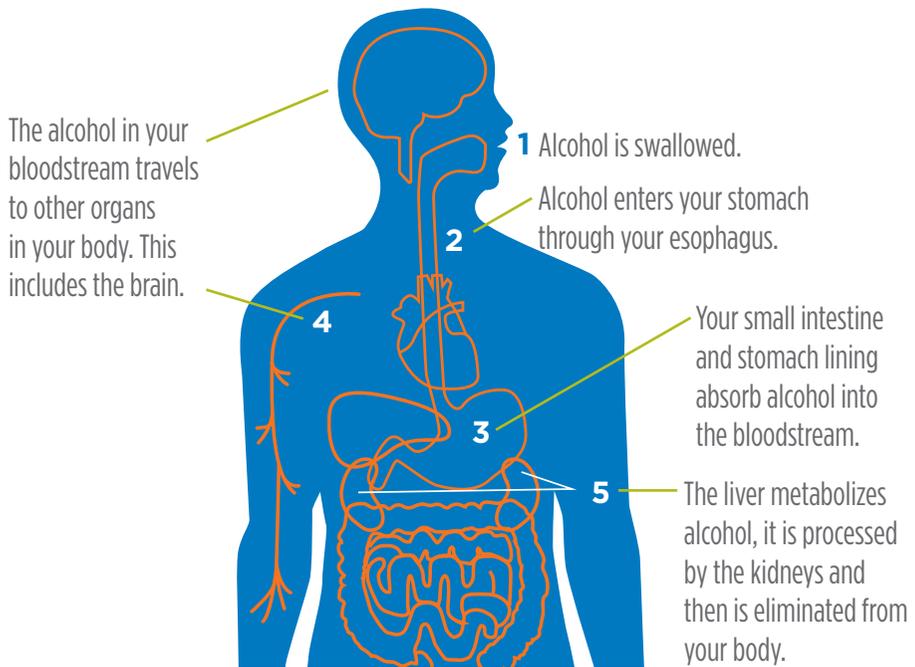


Drinking before a performance can result in delayed reaction time and cramps for up to 72 hours.



Do you want to go to college? Colleges consider underage alcohol violations a serious problem and can deny you admission if you have a history of problems related to alcohol. Now is the time to decide what you want to do with your future and determine how you will accomplish your goals. In order to be successful, focus on your grades, extracurricular activities and making healthy decisions!

# WHAT DOES ALCOHOL DO TO YOUR BODY AND BRAIN?



## RISKS OF DRINKING EARLY

The way your body reacts to alcohol depends on your gender, weight and rate of alcohol consumption. The following describe only some of the effects alcohol can have on the body. Your brain and body are still growing and won't stop until you are in your twenties! For healthy development, your brain needs an alcohol and drug-free body. Taking care of yourself should be your first priority!

- **Alcohol is absorbed directly into the bloodstream, which means the entire body becomes impaired.**  
Alcohol increases risks of accidents, fights and injuries.
- **Alcohol alters the ability to make decisions.**  
Don't let your friends and family down.
- **Alcohol gives a false sense of self-confidence.**  
Think you're fitting in? Think again.
- **Alcohol delays reaction time and impairs motor skills such as coordination and balance.**  
Heads up! You can get seriously hurt if you can't control your body.
- **Drinking before you're 21 impairs learning and memory.**  
Drinking at a young age increases chances of developing an alcohol disorder and damaging your body.

# WAYS TO SAY NO!

If you use alcohol and drugs, you are more likely to take risks that can lead to serious injuries and dangerous situations.

As you get older, your friends or others might pressure you to try alcohol or drugs. Negative peer pressure is when you feel forced by others to do something you normally wouldn't do. Stand up for yourself and do what you know is right!

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## GREAT WAYS TO SAY "NO" TO NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE:

SPEAK UP! TRY PRACTICING SIMPLE ONE-LINERS SO THAT YOU CAN EASILY REFUSE SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT.

It's just not for me!

It's not what I want!

I love myself too much!

My parents would be upset!

No thanks, I need all of my brain cells!

Making positive choices is easier than you think! You may think your peers are drinking, but that isn't necessarily the case. Stay involved in school and community activities.

**More importantly, learn to say "no!"**



## SAFETY TIPS



If you see something wrong, talk to a parent or a trusted adult.



If you plan on leaving without your parents, ask their permission and tell someone!



Make sure your parents are in the loop and know how to reach you.



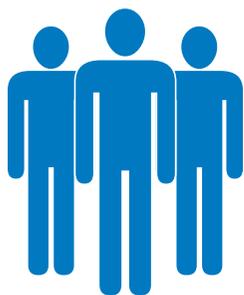
If it smells different or if you don't recognize it, don't drink it!



Keep your cell phone charged in case of an emergency.



If you see a friend in trouble, seek help immediately.



# ARE YOU A PEER LEADER?

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A peer leader is a positive role model among their friends and classmates who helps to create a safe, respectful and welcoming school and community environment. Being able to talk to your parents about alcohol is an important step toward being a leader.

Do you have the qualities and skills to be a strong peer leader in your community and school?

## **Qualities of a good leader:**

**COURAGE:** The mindset that enables you to face difficulty. Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the willingness to do something in spite of fear.

**DECISIVENESS:** Having the willingness and ability to make a decision, judgment call or resolution. Leaders would often rather make the wrong decision than no decision at all.

**PERSEVERANCE:** The ability to remain steady in a course of action, having determination and endurance despite hardship or discouragement.

**CREATIVITY:** The ability to use originality, innovation and imagination to solve problems. A creative leader thinks "outside the box."

**CONFIDENCE:** The steady belief or trust in yourself and your abilities.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE:** The ability to control your actions and say "no" in situations when you don't feel safe.

**HONESTY:** Telling the truth and having integrity in your actions and dealings with others.

**RESPECT:** Treating others the way you would like to be treated.

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# Be a Good Role Model

- Don't drink any alcohol before you are 21!
- Know the facts about alcohol and how it affects your body.
- Don't drink anything that smells or looks different.
- Focus on getting good grades in school and making healthy decisions in order to have a bright future!
- Practice how to say "no!" Don't let your friends or classmates pressure you to do something that you know is not right.
- Always seek help from a parent or a trusted adult if you are in a dangerous situation.
- Know the qualities of a strong leader and work hard to develop each quality.



## TRIVIA

1. True or False. Alcohol gives you the energy to party.
2. What is the legal drinking age in Virginia?
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ metabolizes alcohol.
4. True or False. If you drink before the age of 15, you are about five times more likely to develop an alcohol disorder.
5. Name five qualities of a good peer leader.

### Answers:

1. False. Alcohol is a depressant and slows you down.
2. 21
3. Liver
4. True
5. See list of qualities of a good peer leader.

# RESOURCES

## **National Institute of Health's National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) ([www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov))**

NIDA provides parents and teens with useful statistics on drug abuse. Additionally, NIDA has online prevention resources tailored to teens.

## **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism ([www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov))**

NIAAA supports and conducts research on the impact of alcohol use on human health and well-being. It is the largest funder of alcohol research in the world.

## **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov))**

In addition to valuable tools and tips on drugs and alcohol abuse SAMHSA maintains many online resources perfect for teens to explore prevention.

## **Virginia Rules ([www.virginiarules.com](http://www.virginiarules.com))**

Virginia Rules is an educational program especially designed to help instructors, parents and students understand the law as it applies to teens in their everyday lives.

## Virginia ABC Education and Prevention Resources

### **Being Outstanding Leaders Together (BOLT) Against Drugs and Alcohol**

Provides drug and alcohol prevention knowledge to middle school students through regional community collaboration and high school peer leadership.

### **Miss Virginia School Tour**

In partnership with Virginia ABC, Miss Virginia travels across Virginia to elementary schools spreading a message of health, wellness and prevention with students and teachers.

### **Project Sticker Shock**

Supplies are provided to community groups in an effort to decrease social providing. The project includes stickers being placed on alcohol packaging reminding buyers to not provide to minors and is done in conjunction with a press event to help raise awareness.

### **Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Project (YADAPP)**

A high school youth-led leadership conference equipping teens with a strategic plan and empowering them to keep their schools and communities alcohol and drug free.

### **College Tour**

A multi-stop conference that focuses on promoting zero tolerance for underage drinking, social responsibility, collaboration and leadership on college and university campuses across Virginia.

### **Responsible Sellers & Servers: Virginia's Program (RSVP)**

#### **Managers' Alcohol Responsibility Training (MART)**

Trainings are held regionally and conducted by Virginia ABC special agents to help businesses that sell alcohol become more responsible and to better understand Virginia laws, rules and regulations.

### **Virginia Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (VOSAP)**

An organization that promotes collaboration among state and local agencies, organizations, coalitions and faith communities that address substance abuse prevention.

### **Alcohol and Aging Awareness Group (AAAG)**

A statewide affiliate group that provides education, training and resources to prevent the misuse of alcohol and medications as adults age.

### **Educational Materials**

Publications, online training, and public service announcements are available to the general public at no cost.

### **Grant Program**

Alcohol education and prevention grants assist community partners to develop and enhance initiatives related to alcohol education and prevention. Grant cycle is July through June with applications due in the spring.

# My Pledge

## Student Contract

- I will be a good role model and peer leader.
- I will say “no” if my friends or classmates pressure me to do something that I know is not right.
- I will help to make sure my school and community is safe, respectful and welcoming to everyone.
- If I am ever in a dangerous situation, I will seek help from a parent or a trusted adult.
- I will make good, safe and healthy decisions.
- I choose not to drink alcohol before I am 21 years old.

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**Student Signature**

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**Date**

## How I can be a good leader:

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## Goals for my future:

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## Ways I can say "no" to alcohol:

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*VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL*

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