



# Drug Free Family Newsletter

## Alcohol Awareness Month is Here



April is national Alcohol Awareness Month, and with proms and graduations rapidly approaching, it's a good time for adults to discuss the dangers of underage drinking with the young people in their lives.

The second edition of Drug Free Marion County's Local Report on Underage and Binge Drinking, released in March, showed that parents and guardians need to be concerned: Alcohol use among sixth, eighth and tenth graders in Marion County outpaces that of the state and region. Not only are students starting to drink at younger ages, but they are drinking more frequently. And by the time students reach twelfth grade, more than 65 percent have used alcohol.

Also disturbing: By tenth grade, almost one in five students reported binge drinking in the last two weeks, a statistic that holds steady into the senior year in high school. ([Click here](#) to read a summary of Local Report results.)

Drinking and driving is a particular concern, especially with spring celebrations in full swing. According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 20, and the rate of fatal crashes among alcohol-involved drivers between 16 and 20 years old is more than twice the rate for alcohol-involved drivers 21 and older.

Numerous studies across the U.S. have shown that young people who drink also are more likely to be involved in high-risk behaviors such as other drug use, weapon carrying, fighting and perpetrating or being the victim of date rape.

This issue of Drug Free Family Newsletter contains information for

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adults and youth on preventing and addressing underage drinking. Please read, share and most importantly, practice the suggestions to ensure that Marion County's young people have a safe and happy spring!

## Tips for Parents on Preventing Underage Alcohol Use



Think your elementary school student is too young to discuss alcohol issues with you? Think again. The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information reports that when parents communicated and were involved with children ages 10 and 11, those children were more likely to see alcohol use as harmful and less likely to initiate alcohol use early -- and by ages 17 and 18, they were less likely to misuse alcohol.

What does such communication involve? Setting clear expectations for a child's behavior, practicing good supervision and consistent discipline and minimizing family conflict are key. And remember that your own behavior also influences your child's actions.

[The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Families](#) offers plenty of concrete advice to help parents and guardians reduce factors that increase the chances that youth will drink. Here are some ideas to get you started:

### Have the Talk

- When you talk to your children about drinking, make sure it's a conversation, not a lecture. Listen to them and respect what they say.
- Make it clear that you expect your children to avoid alcohol. Enforce the rules that you set.
- Explain the dangers of underage drinking and the seriousness of the consequences.
- As teens become older, discuss the laws about underage drinking, including the 21-minimum-age requirement.
- Discuss ways that your children can resist alcohol, including how to say no if friends pressure them to drink. Also stress how to avoid dangerous alcohol-related situations, such as riding in a car driven by someone who has been drinking.

### Be an Involved Parent

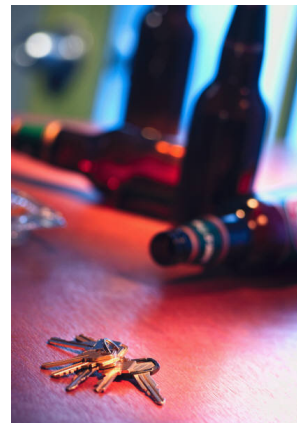
- Make it easy for your children to share information about their lives.
- Know where your kids are, what they're doing, who they're with and who their friends are.
- Don't let young people attend parties where alcohol is served, and don't have alcohol available when your teens host parties at your home.
- Find fun activities for the whole family that don't involve alcohol. (Several free events and programs are listed later in this newsletter.)
- Encourage your child to be involved in family life, such as doing chores or, when appropriate, caring for a younger sibling.

## Lead by Example

- If you drink, do so responsibly. Do not drink too much or too often.
- Avoid alcohol in high-risk situations. Don't drive after drinking, for example, or bring alcohol onto your fishing or pleasure boat.
- Get help if you think you have an alcohol problem.

## Tips for Teens on Understanding the Risks of Alcohol

To help you make wise decisions about alcohol, you need to get the facts about its effects, Indiana laws and keeping yourself safe. Start with these suggestions from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information and Indiana University:



### How Alcohol Affects You

- Alcohol affects your brain and your body. Use it and you risk coordination problems, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses and blackouts, plus you could damage any organ in your body.
- Alcohol lessens your self-control by depressing your central nervous system, lowering your inhibitions and impairing your judgement. That, in turn, can lead you to drink and drive, or engage in unprotected sex and other risky behaviors.
- Alcohol can kill you -- even if you're not the one drinking. Drinking large amounts of alcohol at one time, or very quickly, can result in alcohol poisoning, which can lead to a coma or death. Think it's OK if you abstain while your friends indulge? If you're around people who are drinking, you have an increased risk of being seriously injured, involved in car crashes or affected by violence.
- Alcohol and cars don't mix. A national study in 2003 showed that 31 percent of drivers age 15 to 20 who died in traffic accidents had been drinking alcohol.

### What Indiana Law Says

- It is illegal to buy or possess alcohol if you are under the age of 21. And you don't have to be intoxicated to be charged with underage consumption -- just a couple of sips of beer is enough if your gathering is busted.
- It's not OK to drive an "of age" friend to buy alcohol if you're not 21 or over, even if you haven't been drinking. You can be charged for transporting alcohol in a car driven by a minor, even if you're driving the friend's car and the alcohol hasn't been opened.
- Fake IDs are a bad idea. Get charged with possessing or using a fake ID and you're facing fines, probation -- maybe even jail time. And your driver's license can be suspended for up to a year.
- You don't have to be legally intoxicated to lose driving privileges if you're caught drinking and driving. One drink can make you fail a breath test if you're under 21, and again, you're facing a loss of money, time and your driving privileges.

### What Else You Need to Know

- Beer and wine aren't "safer" than liquor. One 12-ounce bottle of beer or a five-ounce glass

of wine has as much alcohol as a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor.

- There's a difference between teens and adults when it comes to drinking. Teens' brains and bodies are still developing, and alcohol use during this time is more likely to cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism. People who begin drinking by age 15 are five times more likely to abuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 20.
- It's easier to say no than you think. A simple "no thanks," "I don't drink" or "I'm not interested" works just fine.

## Honor a Responsible Business with a Good Neighbor Nomination



Do you know of a neighborhood business that responsibly handles alcohol sales? In observance of Alcohol Awareness Month, Drug Free Marion County wants to recognize those businesses that consistently operate with excellence and help to make our community safer. We're looking for package liquor stores, drug and grocery stores and restaurants and bars with sales clerks, wait staff and bartenders who card customers, refuse to sell to intoxicated persons and prevent adult patrons from purchasing alcohol for minors.

Let a Marion County business know that you appreciate its commitment to the health and safety of our community. Send an email to Julie Saetre at Drug Free Marion County, [jsaetre@drugfreemc.org](mailto:jsaetre@drugfreemc.org), with the following information:

- Business name and contact information
- Reason for nomination (specific examples are encouraged)
- Nominator's name and contact information

Nominations should be submitted by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20.

Drug Free Marion County will review and validate nominations, and Good Neighbor Award Certificates will be given to honored businesses during the week of April 26.

## Drug Free Marion County News Brief: Annual Awards Recipients

Five individuals have been named as Annual Awards recipients by Drug Free Marion County for their work in addressing challenges related to alcohol, tobacco or drug (ATOD) use.

Community Service honorees are: Dean Babcock, associate vice president of Midtown Community Mental Health Center; Sandy Jeffers and Ivy Hogue of Pathway to Recovery; and Mary L. Walker, chair of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Health Committee for the Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations (MCANA).



The Lifetime Achievement recipient is Claudette Dailey, (above center with Drug Free Marion County executive director Randy Miller and board president Charlotte Pontius), a counselor

specializing in addiction services. Dailey also works with numerous area organizations.

"These five individuals have devoted an invaluable amount of time and talent while working to make Marion County a safer, drug-free community," says Randy Miller, Drug Free Marion County executive director. "Their expertise, dedication, compassion and focus have positively impacted the lives of so many Indianapolis-area residents. We welcome this opportunity to honor their achievements and thank them for their service to the community."

The Community Service awards recognize individuals who have demonstrated exemplary actions or outstanding support for initiatives that address ATOD prevention, treatment or criminal-justice issues. The Lifetime Achievement award honors an individual who, over time, has made his/her mark in community efforts to prevent or reduce the use of ATOD. Ideally, this recipient has more than 10 years of experience in his/her field.

For a closer look at the accomplishments of each award recipient, [click here](#).

## Just for Kids: Max the (Alcohol) Facts



How much do you know about alcohol and its effects on the body? Take this quiz to find out. Then share it with your friends!

1. When someone drinks alcohol, about how long does it take to move through the blood stream and reach the brain: a. About 30 seconds. b. Nearly three minutes. c. 10 seconds. d. 1 hour
2. True or False: Alcohol use may produce personality changes.
3. What does BAC stand for?
4. True or False: Only the brain is affected by alcohol use.
5. What percentage of the brain is water: a. 85%. b. 99% c. 12% d. 50%
6. True or False: The majority of kids between 9 and 13 years old use alcohol.
7. True or False: Alcohol has a greater impact on the physical and mental health of young people than it does on adults.

Answers:

1. a. About 30 seconds. And as a depressant, alcohol slows down the functions of your brain and body.
2. True. Alcohol can affect the brain's frontal lobes, which can in turn affect a person's ability to control impulses. This can make someone act without thinking, become violent or take part in harmful activities.
3. Blood Alcohol Concentration, or the amount of alcohol in someone's blood stream.
4. False. Alcohol travels everywhere in the body within minutes of entering the blood stream, reaching every cell.
5. 85%. Alcohol affects just about every bodily system.
6. False. Often, kids think their peers are using alcohol -- but it's not true.
7. True. Your body and brain are still developing, and alcohol can interfere with proper growth. And because your body is smaller than an adult's, the same amount of alcohol has a greater affect on you.

Quiz courtesy [www.asklistenlearn.com](http://www.asklistenlearn.com).

## Upcoming Events

### Local Advisory Council Meeting

**When:** Monday, April 12, noon to 1:45 p.m.

Monday, May 10, noon to 1:45 p.m.

**Where:** United Way/RCI Room

3901 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, 46205

**What:** The Local Advisory Council works to change the availability and social norms around alcohol in Marion County.

### Local Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup Meeting

**When:** Thursday, May 20, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

**Where:** Drug Free Marion County

2506 Willowbrook Parkway, Indianapolis, 46205

**What:** This group works to gather data on alcohol use in Marion County.

### Youth Advisory Council Meeting

**When:** Tuesday, April 13, 6 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, April 27, 6 to 8 p.m.

**Where:** Drug Free Marion County

2506 Willowbrook Parkway, Indianapolis, 46205

**What:** The Youth Advisory Council is committed to preventing and reducing the negative consequences from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in our community.

## Our Mission

*Drug Free Marion County -- a not-for-profit organization -- plans, promotes, implements and coordinates community efforts to prevent and reduce the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among youth and adults.*

Contact Us:

Drug Free Marion County

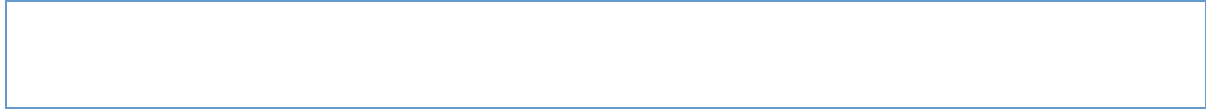
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