

FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL IN NEBRASKA



Alcohol is an addictive drug.

Alcohol is a depressant, addictive drug. It is a controlled substance for a great number of Nebraska citizens (namely all of those citizens under the age of 21).

Alcohol causes illness and death.

Each year, alcohol kills over 120,000 Americans. At least 25% of all hospital visits are related to the use of alcohol.

Alcohol is the number one preventable cause of death among young people.

Alcohol use is related to over one-half of all car crashes, suicides, drownings, falls, homicides, traumas and other causes of death among America's -- and Nebraska's -- adolescents. Over 90% of college hazing deaths are alcohol-related. One August 1996 study in Douglas and Sarpy County found that news accounts listed that 37 people had died in these two counties under circumstances directly related to underage alcohol consumption since January 1, 1990.

Alcohol use is related to one-half of all problems plaguing teenagers in America.

Alcohol use is related to at least one-half of all crime, violence, rapes, sexual activity, poor school performance, assaults, accidents and other problems among underage populations in America – and Nebraska.

Almost all first users of alcohol are under the age of 21.

Adults rarely initiate alcohol use. **90%** of all high school seniors have tried alcohol, usually without the permission of their parents or guardians. **80%** of these seniors are regular alcohol users, namely, they have used alcohol within the past month. Nebraska adolescents usually use alcohol at rates higher than the national average.

At least 8 million American teenagers drink alcohol every week.

Teens from across the United States, including Nebraska, report that it is easy to obtain alcohol. Seven million American teens report that they are able to walk into a store and purchase alcohol. Jr. and Sr. high school students in the U.S. drink 1.1 billion cans of beer each year.

Nebraska's young people use alcohol at a higher rate than the national average.

Nebraska adolescents have consistently used alcohol and reported binge drinking (at least 5 drinks in a row at one sitting) at a much higher rate than the national average.

Alcohol is a gateway drug.

Like tobacco and marijuana, alcohol is a gateway drug. It's use is a strong predictor of future drug use and problem alcohol use. The average age of **first use** of alcohol in Nebraska is **12** years of age.

The alcohol industry spends at least \$3 billion annually in advertising and promotion.

Alcohol costs Nebraska approximately \$600 million each year.

The cost to Nebraska, in terms of lost productivity, morbidity, health care, and crime is \$400 for every man, woman and child. Yet, alcohol tax revenue in Nebraska is approximately \$16 million.

-Nebraska Health and Human Services System and PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.



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