

Adolescent Alcohol Use in Arkansas

Alcohol use by adolescents in Arkansas is a serious health and safety problem

Of the over 85,000 students (grades 6, 8, 10, and 12) who participated in the 2008 Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) survey¹,

- 45.2% have used alcohol sometime in their lives
- 19.8% have used alcohol during the past 30 days
- Most drink at their own homes or at others' homes

Regarding "regular" use (having used in the past 30 days),

- Arkansas students in grades 8, 10, and 12 report similar use to their peers throughout the Nation
- Alcohol use increases with grade level
- Nearly half of Arkansas' 12th graders report using alcohol in the past 30 days

Arkansas students report using alcohol for the first time at age 12.6¹

Heavy drinking among youth is also a concern in Arkansas.

- Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more drinks in a row
- 25.2% of Arkansas' 12th graders report binge drinking¹
- Over 700 Arkansas 6th graders report binge drinking¹

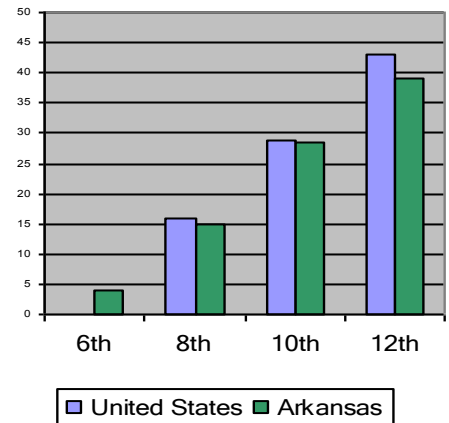
Arkansas youth tend to start using alcohol earlier than their peers throughout the Nation.

- The national age of first use is 13.2 years old³
- Arkansas youth begin drinking at an average age of 12.6¹

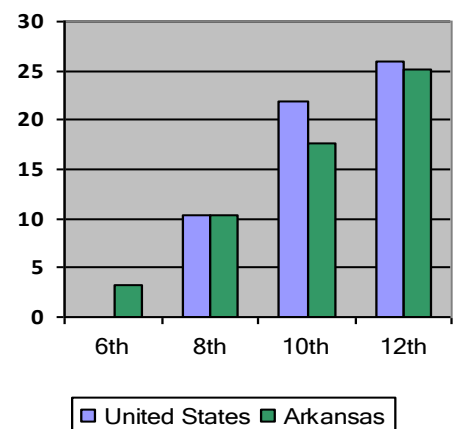
Parents and other adults should talk with young people about these consequences of underage drinking:

- Alcohol is the leading cause of death among young people (FACE Project)
- Alcohol use results in deaths due to car crashes, homicides, suicides, and other injuries
- The brain continues to develop into a person's twenties. Underage drinking can keep the brain from developing as it should. This results in problems with judgment and decision-making.
- Drinking is associated with other risky behaviors such as sexual activity, violence, and delinquency
- Those who use alcohol prior to age 15 are four times more likely to have long-term problems with alcohol abuse than those who wait until they are 21 to begin drinking (Office of the Surgeon General)

Past 30 Day Alcohol Use^{1,2}



Binge Drinking^{1,2}



¹ Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA), 2008 - a student survey conducted annually by the AR Department of Human Services

² Monitoring the Future (MTF), 2008 - a project of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

³ National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2005-2006 - a project of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

To learn more, contact:

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