

# Adolescent Alcohol Use in Arkansas

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

Of the over 88,000 students (grades 6, 8, 10, and 12) who participated in the 2007 Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment (APNA) survey,

- 45.4% have used alcohol sometime in their lives
- 20.5% 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' 12<sup>th</sup> graders report using alcohol in the past 30 days

Arkansas students report using alcohol for the first time at age 12

Heavy drinking among youth is also a concern in Arkansas.

- Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more drinks in a row
- 26% of Arkansas' 12<sup>th</sup> graders report binge drinking
- Over 800 Arkansas 6<sup>th</sup> graders report binge drinking

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

- The national age of first use is 13.2 years old (National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2005-2006)
- Arkansas youth begin drinking at an average age of 12.6 (APNA, 2007)

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
- Underage drinking can cause damage to the brain, which continues to develop into a person's twenties
- 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, 2007).

To learn more about underage drinking, or to find out how to be involved with prevention efforts in your area, contact:

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention  
305 South Palm Street  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
(501) 686-9030

