

April is NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month

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[NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month](#), held every April, was founded by and has been sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) since 1987 to increase public awareness and understanding aimed at reducing the stigma associated with alcoholism that too often prevents individuals and families from seeking help.

For the 27th Anniversary of NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month, NCADD has chosen the theme "**Help for Today. Hope For Tomorrow**".

Our theme is designed to draw attention to the pervasive impact that alcohol, alcohol-related problems and alcoholism have on young people, their friends, on families and in our communities.

More than 18 million individuals or 8.5% of Americans suffer from alcohol-use disorders. In addition, there are countless millions of individuals, family members and children who experience the devastating effects of the alcohol problem of someone in their life. In fact, 25% percent of U.S. children have been exposed to alcohol-use disorders in their family.

The economic cost of alcoholism and alcohol abuse has recently been estimated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be \$223.5 billion (\$746 per person) or about \$1.90 per drink (see more here.) Researchers found the costs largely resulted from losses in workplace productivity (72%), health care expenses for problems caused by excessive drinking (11%), law enforcement and other criminal justice expenses related to excessive alcohol consumption (9%), and motor vehicle crash costs from impaired driving (6%).

Alcoholism places an enormous emotional, physical and financial burden on family members and children of the person who is addicted to alcohol: 75% of domestic abuse is committed while one or

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both members are intoxicated and family members utilize health care twice as much as families without alcohol problems. Emotional and physical abuse often occurs as a result of parents or spouses losing control with family members because of alcohol. Drinking and driving causes 16,000 deaths per year, and thousands more injuries. Up to 75% of the crimes are committed by people under the influence of alcohol.

Teens that experiment with alcohol before age 15 are four times more likely to become alcohol dependent when they are older than those that wait until age 20. Which is why education and prevention are co critically important to reducing alcohol-related problems and alcoholism.

Unfortunately, still too many of our children are drinking alcohol, at too early an age. Much of it goes unnoticed and unchecked by adults. Unconcerned or unaware of the health risks, lacking in other coping skills, and eager to find peer acceptance, many teens are involved in regular alcohol use, which puts them at greater risk for alcoholism, as well as related problems like drunk driving, sexual assault, and further drug use.

So who is at risk for alcohol use and abuse? Often, kids who experience depression and anxiety may use alcohol in an attempt to self medicate their symptoms. Kids isolated from their family system without other positive connections may seek involvement with alcohol or drug-involved peer groups. Kids with pervasive family or school-related stress, poor coping skills, and family members with drug or alcohol problems are also at increased risk. However, though some groups may be at increased risk, alcohol use among teens is such a pervasive problem that all teens can benefit from prevention activities.

Parents can help to reduce their children's risk of problem drinking by educating their kids and keeping a more watchful eye on them, especially as they enter middle schools and high school. We know that high levels of parental monitoring are associated with lower levels of both high school and eventually college drinking. Research has linked parents' disapproval of underage drinking to a lower risk of alcohol use, and that increased parent-child hostility has been tied to a greater likelihood of problem drinking.

The month of April will be filled with activities on local, state, and national levels that work to educate people about treatment and prevention of alcoholism. Local [NCADD Affiliates](#) as well as schools, colleges, churches, countless community organizations will sponsor events that create

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awareness and encourage individuals and families to get help for alcohol-related problems and the disease of alcoholism.

[NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month](#) raises awareness while encouraging people to make healthy and safe choices when it comes to use of alcohol. It also opens a window of opportunity to address underage drinking, which is one of the reasons why NCADD Alcohol Awareness Month is recognized in April – the beginning of prom and graduation season. For additional information and resources: [Learn About Alcohol](#). To learn more about the issue of underage drinking, [FOR YOUTH: Underage and College Drinking](#).