

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Prom Season Compounded by Data that Shows Alcohol Still Youth Substance of Choice

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Alcohol remains the most used and abused substance among youth in the U.S. Despite historical, long-term declines, a significant portion of adolescents still consume alcohol, frequently in the form of dangerous binge-drinking episodes.

Youth Alcohol Statistics:

Nationally representative surveys, including the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and Monitoring the Future (MTF), outline the scope of underage drinking (ages 12 to 20):

- **Lifetime Use:** By 8th grade, about 18% of teens have tried alcohol, which jumps to 41% for 10th graders and nearly 60% for high school seniors (12th grade).
- **Past-Month Use:** Roughly 13% of youth aged 12 to 20 report drinking in the past month. Among high schoolers specifically, past-month consumption ranges from 11% (8th grade) to up to 41% (12th grade).
- **Binge Drinking:** When youth drink, they are highly prone to binge drinking. Nearly 8% of youth aged 12 to 20 report binge drinking in the past month.
- **High-Intensity Drinking:** Among 12th graders, roughly 3% report high-intensity drinking, which is defined as 10 or more drinks in a row within a two-week period. [

Monitoring the Future (MTF) is one of the nation's most relied upon scientific sources of valid information on trends in use of licit and illicit psychoactive drugs by U.S. adolescents, college students, young adults, and adults up to age 60. MTF is conducted each year by researchers at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health.

The MTF survey is given annually to students in eighth, 10th, and 12th grades who self-report their substance use behaviors over various time periods, such as past 30 days, past 12 months, and lifetime. The survey also documents students' perception of harm, disapproval of use, and perceived availability of drugs and has been doing so since 1975.

In 2025, alcohol use continued a long-term decline in all three grades for lifetime and past 12-month use. This trend also continued for past 30-day (current) use in 8th and 10th grade, although in 12th grade use increased by 0.6 of a percentage point.

Alcohol use experienced its largest recorded decline in 12th grade (tracked since 1975) and in 10th grade (tracked since 1991) for past 12-month use. The long-term, overall decline has taken place since the year 2000 in all three grades. From 2000 to 2025, past 12-month prevalence has decreased from 73% to 41% in 12th grade, from 65% to 24% in 10th grade, and from 43% to 11% in 8th grade.

While overall use has declined in recent years, the way teens consume alcohol has changed dramatically. Today's alcohol landscape is dominated by sweet, flavored options that mask the high content taste of alcohol, like hard seltzers, alcopops and coolers, and spirit-based ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails. Many teens don't even consider these to be "real alcohol" and are unaware of their actual level of intoxication when drinking these cocktails. Social media-driven drinking games and challenges have made dangerous drinking patterns like binge drinking more normalized. Additionally, RTD beverages are highly portable and effortless convenience marketed in brightly colored packaging.

The RTD Factor: How Normalization Happens:

- **Masked Alcohol Taste:** Sweet, fruity, and soda-like flavor profiles cover the harshness of spirits like vodka and tequila. This makes consuming 15% ABV or higher drinks feel like sipping a juice.
- **High-Volume Packaging:** Many trendy "supersized" RTDs (such as high-alcohol BuzzBallz) hold the equivalent of multiple standard drinks in a single portable container, accelerating the pace of binge drinking.
- **Accessibility & Cost:** Canned cocktails are cheaper than bar tabs and require no mixing, encouraging consumption in casual or unsupervised settings (e.g., parks, at home).

Associated Health Risks:

- **Brain Development:** Because adolescent brains are still developing, early heavy drinking can impair neurological structure and significantly raise the likelihood of developing an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) later in life.
- **Acute Harms:** Quick intoxication leads to impaired judgment, increasing the risk of physical trauma, alcohol poisoning, and involvement in interpersonal violence.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one's health and wellness. The Glen Cove Police Department has been a longstanding member of the Coalition and works diligently to monitor alcohol sales to minors, monitor hot spots where youth are known to drink and provide prevention education to youth and adults about Glen Cove Social Host Law and its consequences throughout the year. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please

follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit www.safeglencove.org.