



POWER TO TAKE A STAND

How alcohol and marijuana
can impair your future





POWER OF YOU(th)[®]

As a teen, you have more power than you think when it comes to saying no to alcohol and marijuana. *Power of You(th)* is one of MADD's programs which provides you with research-based information of the dangers of underage drinking and marijuana use.

This booklet is designed to offer you and your friends tools to resist peer pressure and empower you to take the next step and influence your friends to make safe and smart choices.

We aren't here just to tell you how dangerous alcohol and marijuana can be but also to empower you to say no to alcohol and marijuana.



WHY 21?

It's illegal to drink under the age of 21, and depending on where you live, marijuana might be legal for adults recreationally, but it's never legal for those under 21. No matter what, it is illegal and dangerous for anyone to drive impaired.

We want you to be aware of all the reasons you should follow the law. After all, it's 21+ for a reason. While some might contest the age of 21, they can't dispute the research that shows that the 21 minimum drinking age law saves lives on and off the roadways.

IT'S BIOLOGY, NOT MATURITY. The brain is not fully developed until your mid-20s. That's one reason why drinking alcohol or using marijuana is so harmful and dangerous for youth.

The good news is that research shows that two out of three teens don't drink. It's important that you know and share that you are not alone when you take a stand against underage drinking. **You can positively influence your peers by being an example of what making healthy and smart choices looks like.**

Before we dive in further, test your knowledge about alcohol and marijuana! Scan to visit powerofyouth.com and take the quiz:



ALCOHOL



Alcohol is a drug that depresses the whole body, and impairment begins with the very first drink. Alcohol begins to slow down judgment, coordination, and reaction time. As alcohol levels get higher, breathing and heart rate slow down—and can even stop.

Alcohol may come in many different forms, but no matter what, **IMPAIRMENT BEGINS WHEN ANY AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL HAS BEEN CONSUMED.**

Teens who start drinking underage are **7 TIMES** more likely to be in an alcohol-related crash.

Young drivers (ages 16-20) are **17 TIMES** more likely to die in a crash where alcohol is involved.



- Binge Drinking:** A pattern of drinking when someone consumes 4 to 5+ drinks in about 2 hours.

STUDENTS WHO BINGE DRINK are more likely to do poorly in school, be victims of dating violence as well as participate in dangerous activities such as riding with a drunk driver.
- Poly-Use:** This happens when two or more drugs are consumed at once, in this case alcohol and marijuana.

1 IN 3 YOUTH who drink alcohol have also combined it with marijuana. We know that the dangers become even greater when marijuana is combined with alcohol.

MARIJUANA

Marijuana: The dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant. It contains mind-altering compounds like tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Just like alcohol, **IMPAIRMENT BEGINS WHEN ANY AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA HAS BEEN CONSUMED.**

There are many risks and dangers in consuming marijuana, including:



About **1 IN 10** marijuana users will become addicted. For people who begin using before the age of 18, that number rises to **1 IN 6**.

Marijuana **SIGNIFICANTLY IMPAIRS** judgment, motor coordination, and reaction time. Studies have found a direct relationship between blood THC concentration and impaired driving ability.

The amount of THC in marijuana has been increasing steadily over the past few decades. Higher THC levels may also mean a **GREATER RISK** for addiction.

Legalization: If you live in a state that passed laws to legalize recreational marijuana for adults, you may have questions. This doesn't mean it's "safe" to consume underage. No matter your opinion on legalization, it is **ILLEGAL** in all states for anyone under 21 to use marijuana recreationally.

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL & MARIJUANA ON THE BODY

IT'S BIOLOGY, NOT MATURITY.

Underage alcohol and marijuana use leaves damaging, lifelong effects on the brain and body. Your organs are growing and changing every minute. The brain is not fully developed until the mid-20s, meaning any substance could negatively impact your development.

Your prefrontal cortex—the part of your brain that controls reasoning and helps you think before you act—is growing rapidly. The developing brain is not as efficient at decision making and problem solving as it will be when you're older. Check out all the potential damage that alcohol and marijuana can inflict on the developing body.

REFLECT: Think of two goals you would like to accomplish by the time you graduate high school. How would these negative effects on your health affect your ability to achieve those goals?



- Poor communication and coordination
- Alcohol dependence
- Learning and memory problems (dementia)

- Difficulty thinking and problem solving
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Reduced attention

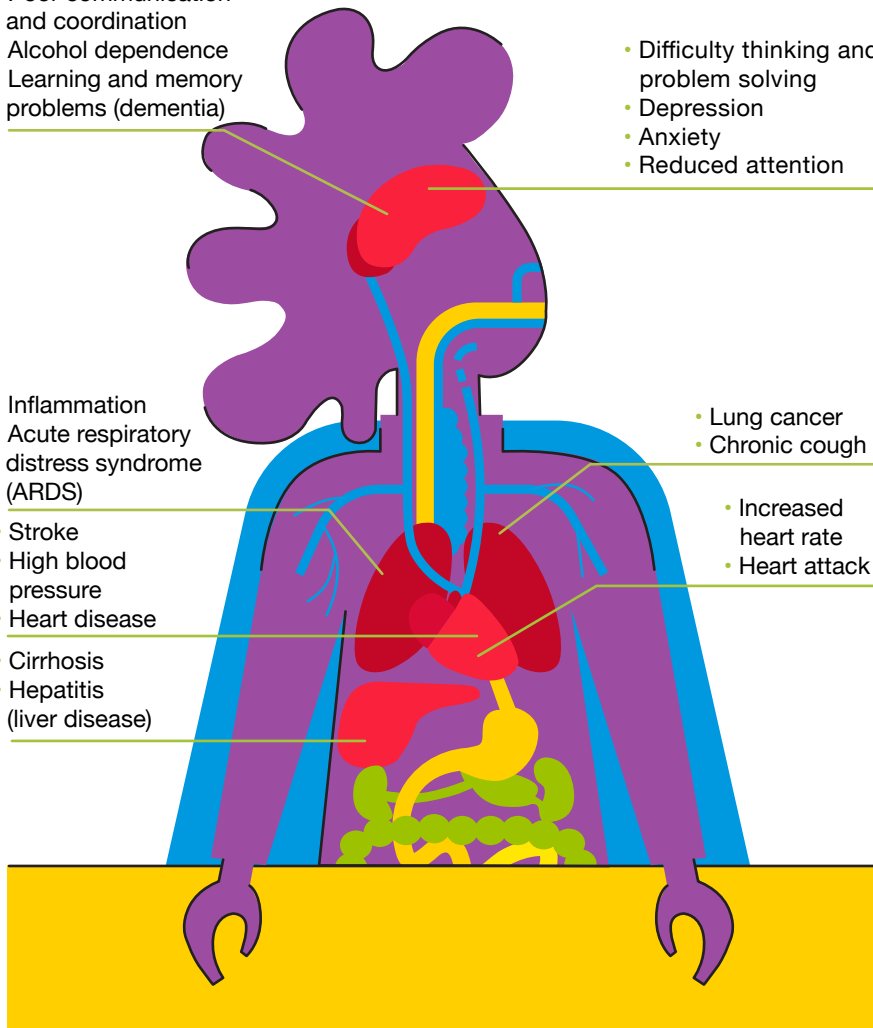
- Inflammation
- Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)

- Lung cancer
- Chronic cough

- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease

- Increased heart rate
- Heart attack

- Cirrhosis
- Hepatitis (liver disease)





CONSEQUENCES



Imagine being arrested for underage drinking or marijuana use. Now think about the embarrassment and disappointment from your friends, family, and even yourself. Add that to a list of other consequences impacting your home life, school life, and future goals.

SOCIAL & ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES



- Bad grades or failing scores
- Impact to your permanent record
- School suspension or expulsion
- Loss of your scholarship or financial aid
- Being kicked off a sports team or out of a school club

LEGAL & FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES



- Suspended license
- Losing your after-school job
- Expensive fines and legal fees
- Criminal record
- Mandated community service hours

LIFE-CHANGING CONSEQUENCES



- Increased risk of addiction
- Limits to your future job options
- Hurting yourself or others, even death
- Increased risk of sexual violence, unsafe sex, or unplanned pregnancies
- Permanent IQ loss and brain damage

DRIVER LICENSE



REFLECT: None of the above risks are worth a night of “partying”. Think about the future YOU want. How would any of these consequences hinder you on your path?



The Art Of Saying No

It can be hard to say no when it feels like everyone else is saying yes. But don't forget, less teens are drinking alcohol and using marijuana than you think. You have the power to influence others too.



REFUSE TO USE

- Simple one-liners: "I'm cool" or "No thanks"
- Offering an alternative: "I'd rather have something else"
- Making an excuse: "I have a test to study for tomorrow" or "I'm really tired"
- Giving a short explanation: "I really don't like the taste" or "I don't like the way it feels to be high"
- Take a stand: "I don't drink/smoke"



SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

- "I heard that new movie was awesome. Do you want to go see it?"
- "I'm hungry for sushi. Let's go get some."
- "Did you see that new dance? I bet we could learn it."



LEAVE

- "I have practice early tomorrow morning. I'll see you guys later."
- "I have to go. I can't risk getting busted."
- "My mom said I have to be home by 9."
- "Totally not worth it, I'm going to go hang out with Muhammad & Alisha instead."
- "I can't drink. I have to be somewhere later."
- "I'm going to leave."

NEVER RIDE WITH AN IMPAIRED DRIVER

Impaired: impairment begins when **ANY** amount of a mind-altering substance is present in the system.

- If someone feels different, they will drive different.
- A common myth is that many people think driving after using marijuana is not as bad as drunk driving.

MYTH- “I drive better high.”

- Driving is a divided attention task. THC mutes the senses needed to drive safely and the ability to react to changing dangers while driving. Effects include slower reactions, lane weaving, decreased coordination, and difficulty reacting to signals and sounds.
- Missing curfew or the inconvenience of finding another ride is not worth the risk. Even if you made it home safely with an impaired driver once before doesn't mean it will be safe the next time. Never ride with an impaired driver, **YOU ARE PRECIOUS CARGO** – handle your life with care.

GET HOME SAFE

- Call or text your parent, guardian, or a trusted adult to come pick you up.
- Plan ahead. If a parent or guardian is not an option or can't be reached consider who another trusted adult might be: an aunt/uncle, neighbor, pastor, or school resource officer.
- If your friend or ride chooses to drive after drinking or using marijuana, never get in the vehicle. The safest and one of the hardest things you'll ever do, is call 911 and report that they are driving impaired.

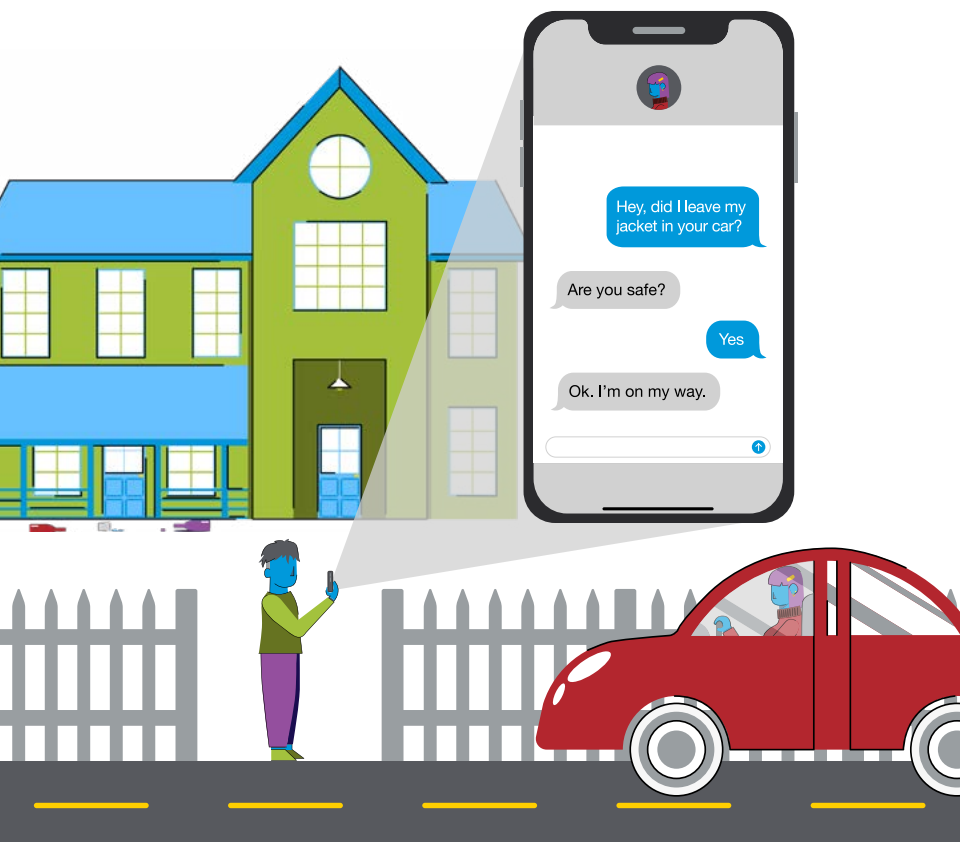
TIP: Come up with a code word or phrase with your parent or trusted adult to use in this situation.

“DID I LEAVE
MY JACKET IN
YOUR CAR?”



Jed's Story, 17, Tennessee

After a night of drinking, Jed's friend wanted to drive home. Jed couldn't convince his friend to not drive, so Jed hopped in the car to try and help. Instead the car crashed; Jed died but his friend survived.



LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Talking with your parents or guardians

Establishing a line of communication with an adult you trust can make a big difference on your life: from influencing your decisions to not use drugs, to knowing you have someone to call if you're in danger.

Here's our tips for starting that conversation:

• BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR CONCERNS

- "I'm not sure what to do when Jenny's sister offers me beer at their house."
- "I'm worried about Michael. He has been talking a lot about weed lately."

• SHOW TRUST

- "I wanted to know what the expectations are for me in our family."
- "Can I ask you for some advice?"

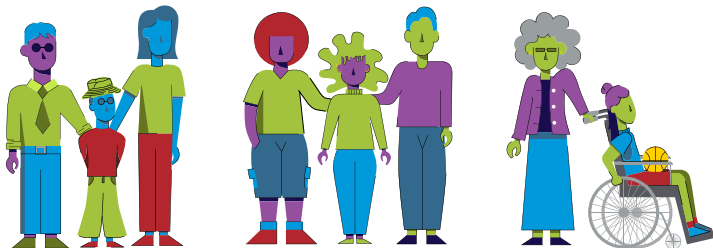
• RESPECT THEIR OPINIONS AND KEEP AN OPEN MIND

- "I understand why you feel that way."
- "It makes sense to me why those are the rules."

• ASK FOR HELP

- "If I'm at a party and something happens, can I call you for help?"
- "If you aren't available, who else should I call if I need help?"

REFLECT: What do you think is your parent or guardians' motive for wanting you to resist using alcohol and marijuana?



Talking with your friends or peers

It can be uncomfortable explaining to your friends or peers that you aren't interested in drinking alcohol or using marijuana. But being honest with them is the best way you can ensure theirs and your own safety and wellbeing. Decide together to not drink or use marijuana underage.

- 1. MAKE A PACT** – Take the Pledge together!
- 2. HAVE A PLAN** - Decide how you can help each other out of uncomfortable or dangerous situations involving alcohol and drugs before you go out.
- 3. PAY ATTENTION** - If you think your friend is using alcohol or other drugs, talk to them or a trusted adult to keep them safe.
- 4. CALL FOR HELP** - Never let your friend drive impaired and never ride with someone who has consumed alcohol or other drugs. Call a trusted adult for a safe ride home or call 911 in an emergency.





TAKE THE PLEDGE

Every decision you make, every conversation you have, every person you impact makes a difference. Decide that your future is not worth risking, take a stand and protect your future.

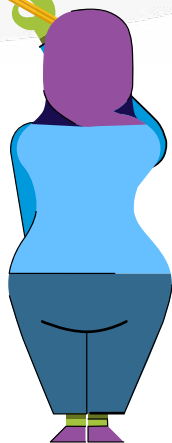
The Pledge

- Because it is illegal and dangerous, I pledge not to drink alcohol before age 21 or use other drugs.
- Because I am precious cargo, I pledge never to ride with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.
- If I find myself in a situation where I feel unsafe or uncomfortable, I pledge to call a trusted adult for a safe ride home.



Take A Stand

Spread awareness of the dangers of alcohol and marijuana with your peers, become a MADD Teen Leader, share this booklet, and promote *Power of You(th)* at your school. Learn more at powerofyouth.com.



MADD National President Alex Otte's Story

In my life, I have been greatly affected by other people's decisions regarding alcohol. When I was 13 years old, I was run over by a drunk boater. I lost my leg and broke a lot of the bones in my body, including my neck, and also sustained a severe brain injury. My life was changed forever, to no fault of my own, but still I am thankful. Since then, I have received massive amounts of support from my friends, family, and MADD. For many years, I thought that the event that would forever have the greatest impact on my life was the result of another person's choice. Only years later did I learn that my greatest strength came from the choices that I made for myself, not the ones that someone else made for me. Protect your future, you have the power to take a stand.



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About Mothers Against Drunk Driving®

Founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD®) is the nation's largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes, and prevent underage drinking. Visit madd.org or call 1-877-ASK-MADD.



About *Power of You(th)*®

MADD's *Power of You(th)* program focuses on reducing underage drinking and drug use. At MADD, we know that our hopes for a safer future are riding on tomorrow's drivers. By getting today's youth off to a good start, we are taking a giant step toward fulfilling our vision of a nation without drunk driving. That's why we're focused on tackling underage drinking, a problem that threatens the safety of our kids and endangers entire communities, now and down the road. Visit powerofyouth.com to learn more.



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