

ALCOHOL USE

The Knowledge Effect wants you to know the facts before you drink. Parents and teens, well armed with information, are more likely to spot bad habits and stop them before the habits become a problem.

UNDERAGE DRINKING:

Underage drinking is dangerous, against the law, and is a major cause of death from injuries in young people. Dangers of alcohol poisoning; suicide; homicide; traffic crashes; and injuries from falls are potential complications that a teenager could face. The physical side effects are a real risk, alcohol can harm the brain, which continues to develop until the mid-twenties.

The psychological effects can be just as concerning. Alcohol can lead to other drug use and impair a person's judgment, allowing them to take risks they wouldn't normally consider. Increased sexual activity is linked to alcohol use of teenagers, opening them up to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

We want teens to be armed with tools to help them avoid drinking in the first place. Resisting peer pressure to drink isn't easy. You have the right to say no, and you don't have to give a reason, you are allowed to walk away.

RESPONSIBLE DRINKING FOR PERSONS 21 AND OLDER:

Alcohol is one of the most abused substances on the market. If not consumed responsibly, there are real consequences and harm. It is important to understand the risk associated with alcohol consumption and improve your drinking habits with a few key tips:

KNOW YOUR DRINK SIZE. Believe it or not, a “standard” drink size exists and not all drinks meet this standard. Any drink that contains about 0.6 fluid ounces or 14 grams of pure alcohol is considered a single drink by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAA).

Below is a depiction of the standard drink size:



KNOW WHAT IS CONSIDERED RISKY DRINKING.

Understanding that any form of alcohol consumption can pose risks is the first step in responsible drinking.

Binge drinking poses high risks and is a problem among youth and adults. NIAAA defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels to 0.08 g/dL. This typically occurs after 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men—in about 2 hours. According to the NIAA low-risk drinking is defined below. Keep in mind that individuals are different and risky drinking is different for everyone especially when considering health factors and how alcohol personally affects you. **You may need to drink less or not at all.**

LOW-RISK DRINKING LIMITS		MEN	WOMEN
	ON ANY SINGLE DAY	no more than 4 drinks on any day	no more than 3 drinks on any day
	PER WEEK	no more than 14 drinks per week	no more than 7 drinks per week

To stay low risk, keep within BOTH the single-day AND weekly limits.

DO NOT GET BEHIND THE WHEEL. Even one drink can impair your judgment. Buzzed driving is drunk driving and can leave you criminally liable during a car crash. By designating a driver or calling for a driving service, you are saving your life and the lives of others. In 2015 nearly 19 fatal crashes occurred in the City of Lafayette, 17 of these were alcohol-related. Drinking and driving presents real consequences: bodily injury, loss of driving privileges, increased auto insurance rates, \$5,000 + in fines, fees, court costs, etc. Know the risk and don't get behind the wheel.

Think You Might Have a Problem?

If problems do come up, treatment is available; the earlier the problem is treated, the better the outcome can be. Here are some symptoms to look out for:

- **Increased (and high) tolerance for more alcohol**
- **Withdrawal**
- **Loss of control**
- **Desire to stop drinking but an inability to stop**
- **Increased time, energy and focus on alcohol**
- **Continued drinking despite negative consequences**

Alcoholism causes depression, lethargy, anger and other emotional issues. Alcoholics hide liquor, wine and beer where no one will find it and neglect important obligations so they can drink. Once someone makes the decision to seek help, they will face further obstacles on the road to recovery. Treatment programs can help through the detox process and ease withdrawal systems. Some facilities allow the addict to receive help at home while other have an in-patient program. Medical attention combined with group therapy, private therapy and regular maintenance and event meetings can help people beat the alcohol habit. ***The road is long, but it's worth it.***

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

At **THE KNOWLEDGE EFFECT** we strive to assess the risks factors posed by alcohol within Lafayette Parish and address those factors by implementing strategies for change. Our aim is to curb underage drinking and promote responsible drinking habits for those who can legally consume. Specific action steps taken by our coalition and our partners include:

1. Promoting high visibility enforcement for impaired drinking
2. Assisting in the development of Drug Recognition Expert training
3. Advocating for policies to reduce the availability of alcohol among youth
4. Educating high-school students about impaired driving
5. Educating school system employees on recognizing the early signs of abuse
6. Providing alcohol-free zones for Mardi Gras and tailgating