

WRAP'S 2026 YOUTH GUIDE

The Washington Regional Alcohol
Program's (WRAP) 2026 School
Resource Guide to Preventing
Underage Drinking





In 2023 2,148 of 15-20-year-old drivers were killed in motor vehicle crashes. Thirty-percent of the young drivers who were killed in crashes had a BAC of .01 g/dL or higher. Finding this completely unacceptable, the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) and its community partners have joined forces and renewed their efforts to create an effective combination of outreach, public information, education and advocacy to decrease underage drinking. WRAP offers this online Youth Guide as a resource to educate teens and keep them safe year-round.

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Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP)

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with helping to keep the annual percentage of metro-Washington traffic deaths involving alcohol-impaired driving historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may be best known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.



WRAP's School-Based Programs and Initiatives

The nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) offers a vast array of services to fight underage drinking and impaired driving in the Washington-metropolitan area.

Alcohol Awareness for Students

Multi-media outreach program using an interactive PowerPoint presentation, video and Fatal Vision® goggles to educate teenagers and young adults about the dangers and consequences of underage drinking and impaired driving as well as the importance of making safe, healthy decisions.

- Stimulates discussion through innovative questioning and interactive demonstrations
- Raises awareness of the consequences of underage drinking and impaired driving with the use of Power Point presentations and videos
- Associates stereotypical student decisions with alcohol-induced risky behaviors
- Utilizes local law enforcement partnerships for increased effectiveness

- Interactive use of unique "Fatal Vision" goggles
- Caters to the individual needs of each audience

Youth Safety Events

Building on the success of WRAP's previous GEICO Student Awards, WRAP launched new, in-school, interactive and GEICO-resourced youth safety events addressing topics ranging from underage drinking, teen driving, bullying and date violence.

- Assortment of safety-oriented activities
- Discuss a spectrum of youth safety issues
- Collaborate with WRAP partners to bring relevant information



Alcohol and Addiction

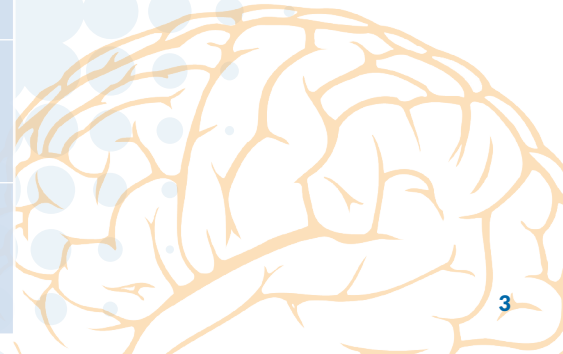
Four Basic Stages of Alcohol Use in Teens

User Type	Use	Behavior
Initial user	Weekend or occasional use. The user learns he/she can produce a euphoric feeling from using alcohol	No obvious change in personality
Regular user	Moves from occasional weekends to every weekend seeking the “feel good” reaction	Obvious changes in personality. Lying, displays of anger may be confrontational with parents/adults, change of friends. Lack of interest in extracurricular activities.
Daily user achieving the “high feeling” becomes the sole obsession	Daily or frequently during the day. Solitary use and overdose may occur	Lying, stealing, problems with the law, job loss, failure in academics, loss of original friends, depression and suicidal mental health issues may occur.
Complete dependency	Addiction: The user has no control over use at this point. Brain sends signals seeking alcohol.	Total deterioration of physical health, weight loss, chronic cough and memory loss, black outs, flashbacks and frequent feeling of helplessness.

* Source: Loudoun County Public Schools' Substance Abuse Prevention Program. (chart modified)

*** Addiction is a developmental disease. A teenager is more likely to become addicted to alcohol in the future as the brain is still developing.**

* Source: National Institute of Drug Abuse



The Dangers of Binge Drinking

Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more standard drinks within two hours for men and 4 drinks within two hours for women (CDC). Teens tend to drink less often than adults, but when they do consume alcohol, tend to consume a higher quantity. On average, adults consume 2 to 3 drinks while teens consume almost double that, consuming 4 to 5 drinks. This high consumption of alcohol is associated with risky behaviors and health problems. Teens are at higher risk of experiencing these risky behaviors and health problems than adult drinkers.

Binge drinking is associated with many different health problems:

- Alcohol poisoning
- Alcohol-induced blackouts
- Injury
- Involvement in car crashes and fatalities

According to the Monitoring the Future 2026 Survey conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, binge drinking in 8th, 10th and 12th graders numbers held steady but alcohol use slightly decreased.



Staying Aware

- On average, one person is killed in an alcohol-related traffic crash every 42 minutes. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2023)
- In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of 15-20 year olds. 30% of the drivers who were killed in motor vehicle crashes during 2023 had been drinking. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
- If you are arrested for drinking and driving, it will cost you approximately \$5,000-\$20,000 (Thomas Jefferson Area Crisis Intervention Team).

This is the equivalent to

- One used car or a down payment for a new car
- 2,200 movie tickets
- 215 pairs of shoes
- 428 haircuts
- Teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 who drink are **seven-times** more likely to have sex than someone who doesn't drink and twice as likely to have four or more partners, which makes them more susceptible to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) and unplanned pregnancies (Office of National Drug Control Policy).



Alcohol and the Body

BRAIN

- Alcohol affects the frontal cortex, impairing motor coordination skills and decision making abilities.
- It then spreads to the mid-brain where it causes loss of emotional control and increases chances of a black out.
- Alcohol can also alter the brain stem, affecting heart rate and respiratory system, creating body temperature changes and unconsciousness, which could be potentially fatal.

HEART

- Consuming high amounts of alcohol over an extended period of time or too much at once can damage the heart leading to issues such as:
 - Cardiomyopathy
 - Arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat)
 - Stroke
 - High blood pressure

LIVER

- Heavy/Binge drinking can lead to many problems with the liver such as:
 - Steatosis (fatty liver)
 - Hepatitis
 - Fibrosis
 - Cirrhosis

STOMACH

- Excessive alcohol consumption can cause
 - Gastritis
 - Stomach ulcers
 - Stomach cancer

**Information provided by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.*

Underage Drinking Laws and Consequences

Laws	District of Columbia	Maryland	Virginia
Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) Under 21	Any measurable amount of alcohol	Any measurable amount of alcohol	.02 BAC
Illegal to drink and drive	Jail: up to 180 days and/or fine up to \$1000	Fine: Up to \$1000 Suspended License: Max of 1 year	Fine: Up to \$500 or 50 hours community service Revoked License: 12 months Class 1 Misdemeanor
Misrepresentation of Age (Fake IDs)	First Offense: Up to \$300 fine Suspended License: 90 days Multiple Offenses: Fine increase, Suspension days increase	Fine: Up to \$500 Suspended License: Up to 6 months 12 points on your license	Mandatory Fine: \$500 minimum and/or Sanction: 50 hours mandatory community service probation
Illegal to possess, consume or purchase alcohol	Fine: Up to \$500 Suspended License: Up to 3 months	First Offense: \$500 fine Reported Offense: \$1,000 fine Suspend License: Up to one year	Mandatory Fine: \$500 minimum or Sanction: 50 hours mandatory community service probation Suspended License: 6 months community service probation
Adults/Parents Who Aid Minors in Obtaining Alcohol	Fine: \$1000 Jail: 180 days	First Offense: Up to \$5,000 fine Jail: Up to one year	Fine: Up to \$2,500 Drivers License Suspension: Up to one-year for purchasing for underage Jail: One year

Regional DUI & DWI Youth Arrests

Washington-Metropolitan Area Underage DUI/DWI Arrests of Youth in 2024*

District of Columbia	8
Montgomery County, MD	47
Prince George's County, MD	28
Arlington County, VA	10
City of Alexandria, VA	5
City of Fairfax, VA	2

City of Falls Church, VA	1
City of Manassas, VA	1
City of Manassas Park, VA	1
Fairfax County, VA	101
Loudoun County, VA	46
Prince William County, VA	78

*Numbers only reflect those under age 21.

*Information provided by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities

	Total Traffic Fatalities Under 21	Alcohol Related Traffic Fatalities Under 21
District of Columbia	10	0
Montgomery County, MD	7	2
Prince George's County, MD	10	2
Arlington County, VA	1	1
City of Alexandria, VA	2	0
City of Fairfax, VA	0	0

	Total Traffic Fatalities Under 21	Alcohol Related Traffic Fatalities Under 21
City of Falls Church, VA	0	0
City of Manassas, VA	0	0
City of Manassas Park, VA	0	0
Fairfax County, VA	7	3
Loudoun County, VA	4	1
Prince William County, VA	5	1
Regional Total	46	10

**Information gathered from local police departments by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)*

Alcohol-Related Traffic Injuries

Total Alcohol Related Traffic Injuries All Ages

Alcohol Related Traffic Injuries Under 21

District of Columbia	326	0
Montgomery County, MD	906	62
Prince George's County, MD	961	43
Arlington County, VA	76	4
City of Alexandria, VA	66	6
City of Fairfax, VA	17	0

Total Alcohol Related Traffic Injuries All Ages

Alcohol Related Traffic Injuries Under 21

City of Falls Church, VA	38	0
City of Manassas, VA	188	13
City of Manassas Park, VA	13	1
Fairfax County, VA	696	40
Loudoun County, VA	356	15
Prince William County, VA	583	43
Regional Total	4,226	227

**Information gathered from local police departments by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)*

Fact or Fiction

Myth: Drinking isn't all that dangerous.

Fact: One in three 18 to 24-year olds admitted to emergency rooms for serious injuries is intoxicated. Additionally, alcohol is associated with many sexual assaults, homicides, suicides, drownings and accidental injuries or fatalities.

Myth: I'd be better off if I learn to "hold my liquor".

Fact: If you have to drink increasingly larger amounts of alcohol to get a "buzz" or "high" you are developing a tolerance. This increases your vulnerability to many serious problems, including alcoholism. In addition, a person may not look or feel intoxicated, but his or her cognitive and psycho-motor skills are nevertheless impaired putting him or her at high risk for serious problems involving driving, sexual decision making and long term health problems.

Myth: I can sober up quickly if I have to.

Fact: The liver metabolizes about 90% of the alcohol in the body. Only 10% or less is excreted through urine, sweat and breath. It takes at least one hour for the body to fully process one drink. Nothing can speed up this process--not even coffee, cold showers or chugging water.

**Information provided by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.*

Contact Us:

If you have any questions or are interested in scheduling WRAP's Alcohol Awareness for Students presentation or a Youth Safety Event, please call **703-893-0461** or email **wrap@wrap.org**.

Special Thanks To:

District of Columbia Highway Safety Office

**Maryland Highway Safety Office/
Maryland motor Vehicle Administration**

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles