



Teen Alcohol Use: What do They Prefer?

Teen alcohol use is a serious and systemic problem. 40% of 10th graders drink alcohol, and older teens are even more likely to have had alcohol. Teen alcohol use kills approximately 4,300 people each year – more than all illegal drugs combined. Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. Approximately 25% of these involve an underage driver who was drinking. In addition, those who start drinking at the youngest ages are **seven** times more likely to be in an alcohol related crash.

Researchers have become interested in learning more about what types of alcohol appeal to underage drinkers. In this study, investigators examined various types of alcoholic beverages which may be used by teens. The study used data from an online survey of approximately 1000 adolescents aged 13-20 who admitted to using alcohol in the last month.

Flavored Alcoholic Drinks (FADs) are a newer type of beverage. These include:

- malt-based drinks (like Mike's Hard Lemonade)
- spirits-based premixed drinks (like Jack Daniel's cocktails)
- supersized alcopops (like Four Loko or Joose)

Those underage drinkers who drank supersized alcopops were much more likely to say they had

incurred an injury due to their alcohol use compared to those who drank the other alcoholic beverages. These drinks tend to be inexpensive and sugary, which makes them more inviting to young people. There are also fewer regulations on these drinks compared to many other types of alcoholic beverages.

Research in Action

Many FAD containers look similar to sodas and energy drinks. As a result, these cans make it easier to hide what is being consumed. Inspect the cans that come home to ensure they are not alcoholic beverages. Make sure local store clerks are checking ID when selling them.

When you talk to your child about alcohol use, ask about what their friends use. Continue to have these conversations regularly. Make sure your children know your family's values about not engaging in underage drinking. Help them create a safe plan to get home if they get in trouble.