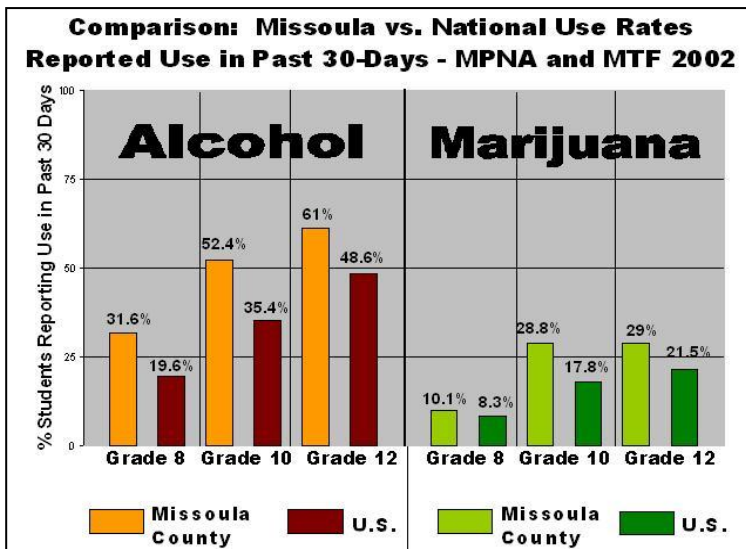
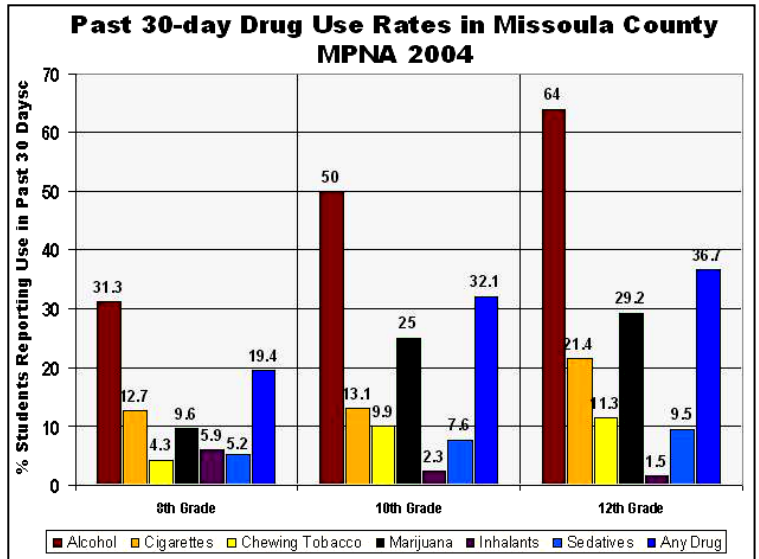


Preventing Underage Drinking: A Community Responsibility

Missoula suffers from some of the highest rates of underage drinking in the nation. Local youth in grades 8 through 12 report 30-day use rates that are 12-17% above the national average. The majority of youth who report drinking alcohol sometime in the past month **also report binge drinking**-- consuming 5 or more drinks in a single sitting-- at least once in the past 2 weeks; this includes 20% of **local 8th graders**.

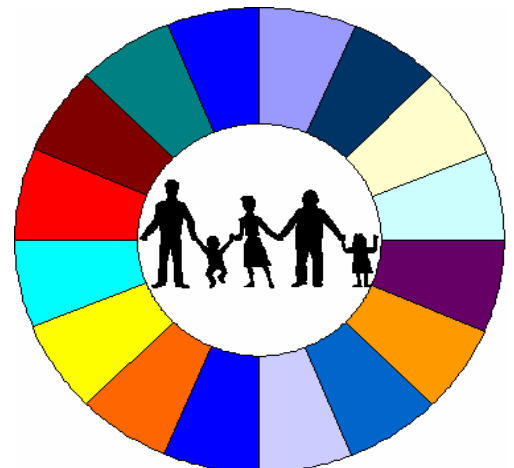
And it's not just that we live in Montana: **Missoula County reports the 2nd highest rates of underage drinking in the state.**



Underage drinking is costly to individuals, families, and the community. It is associated with future alcohol and chemical dependence, crime, depression, sexual assault, academic failure, school drop-out, family and interpersonal conflict, and other unfavorable outcomes. Alcohol is also **the leading factor in the four leading causes of adolescent mortality:** car crashes, homicide, suicide, and injury. Additionally, research shows that alcohol affects adolescent brains differently than adult brains. Underage drinking may **permanently affect brain functioning** and cause physical damage to the hippocampus and frontal lobe.

As a community, Missoula is rallying to prevent underage drinking. Multiple new efforts are in place and will make a difference. However, more needs to happen. **In order for prevention to be effective, multiple sectors of the community must simultaneously employ multiple, ongoing strategies in multiple settings.** That is, it's not enough for parents to model healthy choices, or for schools to offer evidence-based health classes, or for police to enforce minimum legal drinking age laws. Each of these sectors must engage in additional strategies, and must be joined by additional sectors of the community.

All sectors of Missoula have a stake in the health of our youth, and everyone has a role to play in preventing underage drinking. This report, produced by the Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Prevention coalition (MUSAP), compiles input gained from the community over the past year through meetings with representatives of each of the included sectors. This community feedback only hints at the quantity and diversity of strategies that each sector can, and must employ, to protect our youth. Over time, MUSAP will add additional suggestions to this report, and additional sectors, such as the media and government officials. In the meantime, this is a good start for Missoula.



Let's Make the Connection for Missoula youth.

July 2004

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MISSOULA AND THE COMMISSIONERS OF MISSOULA COUNTY
RECOGNIZING THE DANGERS OF UNDERAGE DRINKING TO MISSOULA YOUTH AND THE COMMUNITY AND
SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO PREVENT ILLEGAL, UNDERAGE ALCOHOL USE.**

WHEREAS, the City and County support the purpose of building a healthy community for Missoula's youth; and

WHEREAS, alcohol kills five times more teens than all other drugs combined and is a leading factor in the four leading causes of adolescent mortality: motor vehicle crashes, homicides, suicides, and accidents (American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP); and

WHEREAS, underage drinking is linked with increased risk of physical and sexual assault, vandalism, teen pregnancy, poor academic performance, school drop-out, depression, and family and interpersonal problems, among other serious consequences (National Academies of Science: Institute of Medicine, NAS); and

WHEREAS, research shows that underage alcohol use may permanently impair functioning of the adolescent brain and physically damage its structure (NAS); and

WHEREAS, 40% of youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 will be diagnosed as alcohol dependent later in their lives (National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIAAA) and

WHEREAS, underage drinking costs the United States over \$53 billion annually in medical, enforcement, and other costs for alcohol-related traffic crashes, violent crime, burns, drowning, suicide attempts, fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol poisonings, and treatment (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP); and

WHEREAS, it is unlawful for anyone to knowingly provide alcohol to a person under the age of 21, except in the case of an alcohol beverage provided in a non-intoxicating quantity to a person under 21 years of age by his parent for religious or beverage purposes, by his ordained minister for religious purposes, or by his physician or dentist for medical purposes; and

WHEREAS, the use of alcohol is illegal for anyone under the age of 21; and

WHEREAS, the rate of underage alcohol use in Missoula County is higher than in nearly all other Montana counties and 12-17% higher than the national average, with nearly 1/3 of students in eighth grade and nearly 2/3 of students in 12th grade reporting drinking in the past 30 days (2002 Montana Prevention Needs Assessment, MPNA); and

WHEREAS, the majority of Missoula youth who report using any alcohol in the past 30 days also report drinking five or more drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks (MPNA); and

WHEREAS, 19% of Missoula County 8th graders, 35% of 10th graders, and 43% of 12 graders, report drinking five or more drinks in a row in the past two weeks (MPNA); and

WHEREAS, the only effective way to prevent underage drinking is through a coordinated effort involving youth, law enforcement, the justice system, schools, alcohol retailers, healthcare workers, prevention leaders, policy makers, neighbors, and parents; and

WHEREAS, strong support of these local efforts must be clearly voiced by our community's leadership;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City and County support the efforts of the individuals and agencies working together as the Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Prevention coalition to prevent the #1 health problem facing Missoula youth today – illegal underage alcohol use—and to reduce the harmful effects of underage drinking in the Missoula community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City and County appreciate and encourage community and individual efforts to support children and their parents and to provide resources to help them address underage alcohol use and alcohol abuse; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City and County endorse the efforts of law enforcement and the justice system to hold responsible all alcohol retailers, parents, and other adults who illegally provide alcohol to minors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City and County support efforts to hold minors responsible for their illegal behavior, through school policies, law enforcement strategies, and consistency in MIP sentencing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City and County of Missoula call upon all citizens, parents, and public and private institutions to help prevent underage drinking throughout our community.

Preventing Underage Drinking: A Community Responsibility



In order for prevention to be effective, multiple sectors of the community must simultaneously employ multiple, ongoing strategies in multiple settings.

What does this look like? **What can each sector of *our* community do to help prevent underage drinking?**

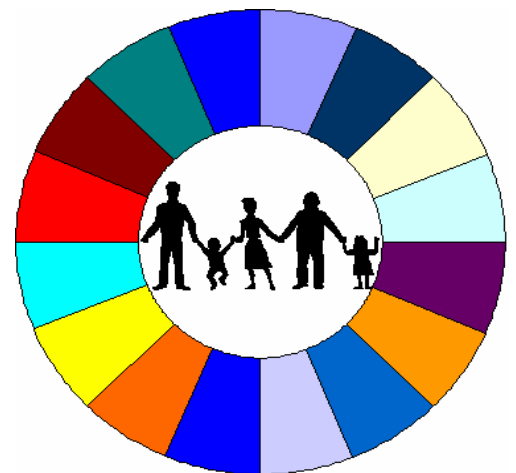
To answer this question, the Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Prevention team (MUSAP) gathered “stakeholder” meetings of 9 relevant community sectors. In addition, members of the Justice sector contributed to this report.

1. **Parents**
2. **School personnel**
3. **Law enforcement**
4. **Justice**
5. **Prevention and early-intervention specialists**
6. **Youth and family service providers**
7. **Treatment providers**
8. **Health care providers**
9. **Alcohol retailers**
10. **Youth and UM students**

As another part of this process, the City Council and County Commissioners adopted the resolution on the previous page.

The included lists of suggested answers to the question “What can your sector do to help prevent underage drinking?” are by no means exhaustive, and many more community sectors need to be brought to the table to help prevent underage drinking. These other sectors include: media, government officials, the faith community, neighbors, and other adults in the community, as well as siblings and other family members.

This report is meant as a first look at what a comprehensive prevention strategy means for Missoula.

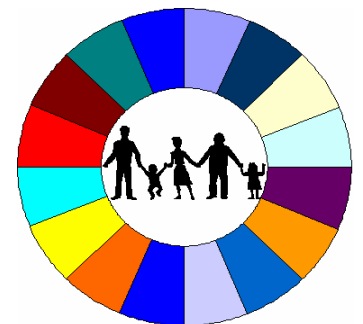


The Missoula Underage Substance Abuse Prevention team (MUSAP) of the Missoula Forum for Children and Youth is a coalition of individuals, agencies, and community leaders working to improve community strategies to reduce underage substance in Missoula County.



1. What can PARENTS do to help prevent underage drinking?

- **Be confident.** Teens say and research shows that parents are the #1 influence on teens' decisions about alcohol and other drug use.
- **Stay connected.** Keep up-to-date on the latest information about alcohol and other drugs, adolescent substance use, related risks and consequences, and local resources. If you recognize signs of alcohol or other drug use in your own child or his/her friends, don't ignore it. Address it.
- **Communicate positively with all your family members.**
 - Practice good listening: make eye contact, ask questions, and try not to jump to conclusions or judgments.
 - Maintain an environment in which your child feels comfortable asking any question, requesting assistance, and talking about issues great and small.
 - Use everyday opportunities (e.g. family dinners or time in the car) and teachable moments (e.g. a scene in a TV show or friends' experiences) to initiate conversations about alcohol & other drugs.
 - Share your opinions, values, and needs, and learn what your child thinks, and why.
 - Recognize your child's efforts and successes and say "I love you" regularly.
- **As a family, establish clear expectations and consequences**, including rules and consequences for alcohol and other drug use.
 - Be consistent: always follow through on consequences. Make sure they are expected, immediate, time-limited, and logical.
 - Give your child a chance to earn greater freedom by showing that he/she is ready for it.
- **Provide opportunities for growth and independence.**
 - Pick your battles. If no one's health or safety is at risk, it's not an obstacle to future success, and it's not illegal, sometimes it's best to allow your child to make mistakes, and learn from them. Stick to the issues that really matter, like underage drinking, because your child's future may depend on them.
 - Encourage participation in after-school activities.
 - Affirm your child's growing independence by sharing family responsibilities, giving choices, and granting new freedoms.
- **Show love and stay involved.**
 - Schedule time together 1:1 and with the full family. Attend your child's games, performances, and other events.
 - Know: Who, What, Where, and When, and make sure your child always knows *your* schedule and how to reach you.
 - Especially during the teen years, allow your child to bring a friend along on family outings and to invite friends to your house allows you to monitor their activities, learn from their conversations, get to know your child's friends, and spend time near, if not with your teen.
- **Don't go it alone.**
 - Get to know your child's friends; they can help you recognize signs of trouble in your child's life, and you can be a good role model and trusted mentor.
 - Get to know the parents of your child's friends; keep in touch especially on issues like alcohol and other drugs.
 - Make use of available support and resources, like parenting classes, informational pamphlets, your family doctor, your child's school, other parents, and additional services in the community.
- **Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.** If you choose to drink, demonstrate that alcohol is not necessary to remedy stress or to have fun. Engage in protective drinking behaviors: drink water, eat, and limit the amount of alcohol you consume to 1 or 2 drinks. Also, make sure non-alcoholic beverages are available for guests and minors, and monitor any alcohol in your home so you know if some is missing.



2. What can SCHOOL PERSONNEL do to help prevent underage drinking?

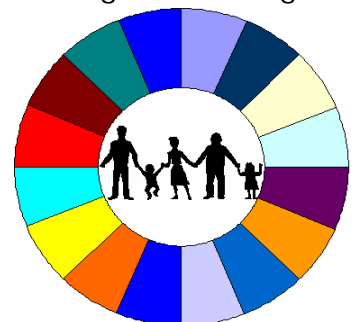


- Know and discuss the health, safety, and legal risks of underage drinking and other drug use.
- Disseminate age-appropriate information about alcohol and other drugs, substance use, related problems, and local resources through evidence-based health curricula and other avenues.
- Develop, discuss, and consistently apply alcohol and other drug policies.
- Maintain clear, age-appropriate, and reasonable behavioral expectations in the school and on the school grounds.
- Understand the signs and symptoms of alcohol and other drug use.
- Refer students to appropriate resources—don't ignore signs of trouble.
- Create an environment in which students feel safe.
- Treat each student fairly and consistently; build a strong relationship with each student.
- Know students by name; take time to listen and mentor.
- Involve students in planning, problem-solving, identifying issues and assessing curriculum in the classroom.
- Promote cooperation over competition. Offer opportunities for the class to work together to help everyone achieve their level of excellence.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.



3. What can LAW ENFORCEMENT do to help prevent underage drinking?

- Enforce existing alcohol-related laws, holding minors and adults responsible to the law.
- Conduct compliance checks, the #1 effective enforcement strategy to ensure that retailers require proper identification from young customers before selling them alcohol.
- Educate the community about alcohol-related laws and the consequences of breaking them.
- Educate the community about the influence of alcohol and other drugs on crime in the community.
- Educate youth through the placement of School Resource Officers in partner schools.
- Protect neighborhoods from alcohol-related vandalism, assault, and other crime, by responding to complaints about large parties.
- Help maintain a safe and enjoyable downtown by utilizing community policing strategies and responding to alcohol-related violations on the streets and in local businesses.
- Provide support to alcohol retailers by responding to calls for assistance, conducting walk-throughs to hold minors responsible for their drinking, and recognizing businesses that use responsible practices.
- Help retailers learn to recognize fake identification by assisting with responsible alcohol beverage service training and working directly with bouncers and bartenders.
- Be consistent with enforcement strategies and communicate consistent messages to minors, alcohol retailers, and other adults.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.



4. What can the JUSTICE SECTOR do to help prevent underage drinking?

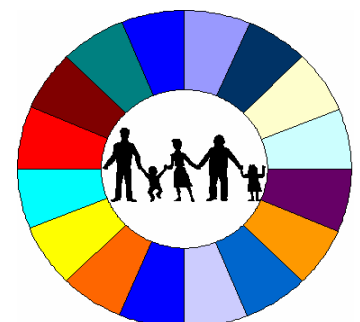


- Through discussions in court proceedings, educate parents about the long-term effects of adolescent alcohol and other drug use and the significant positive effects that parental supervision can have on deterring youth substance use and other risk behaviors.
- Provide educational pamphlets to all parents appearing with youth in court on alcohol-related charges.
- Be consistent in citation of youth for alcohol use as well as in imposition of sanctions.
- Support resources for education, evaluation and treatment of adolescent alcohol and other drug use.
- Maintain statistics on youth cited for MIP and DUI.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.



5. What can PREVENTION and EARLY INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS do to help prevent underage drinking?

- Educate youth about the potential harms of alcohol and other drug use, alternative coping strategies, and available community/school resources.
- Act as a support structure for youth experiencing stress or difficulty at home, at school, or in the community.
- Provide no-cost, multidimensional screening for youth at-risk for substance use.
- Provide a safe and confidential environment in which at-risk youth can freely discuss their issues and ask questions.
- Educate and support parents of youth at-risk for substance use.
- Provide no-cost, Department of Revenue-certified Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service training for alcohol retailers.
- Facilitate community discussions about adolescent substance use and its prevention.
- Educate the public about alcohol and other drugs, consequences of adolescent use, and available resources.
- Strengthen campus-community partnerships and coalition efforts to build a comprehensive prevention strategy for the whole community.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.



6. What can YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE PROVIDERS do to help prevent underage drinking?

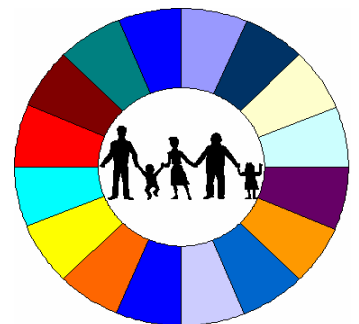


- Provide fun and substance-free social, recreational, educational, and public-service activities that help youth develop new skills, build self-esteem, take on leadership roles, and experience new opportunities.
- Maintain a substance-free and safe environment in which youth can feel comfortable asking questions, requesting assistance, and being themselves.
- Communicate consistent and healthy norms and rules about alcohol and other drug use.
- Keep up-to-date information on alcohol and other drugs, adolescent substance use, related risks, and local resources and share it with youth, parents, and other professionals.
- Learn to recognize signs of alcohol and other drug use and refer youth to appropriate resources—don't ignore signs of trouble.
- Be a mentor. Form meaningful relationships with youth. Listen to and respect the opinions and thoughts of all youth.
- Role model good problem-solving skills; ask youth questions to help guide their own decision-making processes.
- Talk-through and role-play refusal scenarios so youth know a variety of ways to say “no.”
- Keep parents involved and encourage them to recognize their kids' efforts and successes.
- Role model ways to interact with youth that encourage their independence while maintaining clear expectations about healthy and appropriate behavior.
- Provide opportunities for parents to interact with other parents.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.



7. What can TREATMENT PROVIDERS do to help prevent underage drinking?

- Provide easy access to assessment and referral services for substance use.
- Disseminate easy-to-understand information about substance use, related problems, intervention alternatives, and local resources.
- Provide support and education for parents of youth who are using substances or are at risk of substance use.
- Provide in-service training for community agencies/programs regarding substance use and effective intervention strategies.
- Provide advocacy for youth in arenas in which they typically do not have adequate legitimate influence (i.e. family, courts, social services).
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.





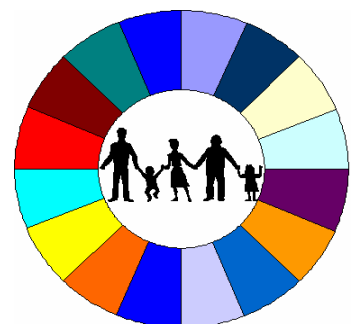
8. What can HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS do to help prevent underage drinking?

- Educate local youth about the physical and neurological health risks of drunk and drugged driving, and underage drinking and other drug use through programs in the schools.
- Educate and encourage health care providers to engage in physician-patient discussions concerning adolescent alcohol and other drug use.
- Be proactive and ask adolescents about alcohol & other drug use during sports and yearly physicals.
- Provide alcohol and other drug education during appointments with adolescents by distributing informational pamphlets and addressing questions about alcohol and other drugs.
- Update patient questionnaires to include questions about alcohol and other drug use and risk factors for abuse.
- Conduct brief bedside behavioral interventions for patients who enter the ER or other medical facility because of an alcohol and other drug-related accident or injury.
- Encourage youth who enter ERs with alcohol and other drug-related injuries to follow up with an appointment for an alcohol/drug consultation.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.



9. What can ALCOHOL RETAILERS do to help prevent underage drinking?

- Develop, practice, and enforce a policy of carding anyone who looks younger than 30 who is purchasing alcohol or tobacco products. Refuse to sell alcohol if the person is: under 21 or fails to show legitimate identification.
- Require all employees to attend free Responsible Beverage Sales and Service Training.
- Prominently display signs alerting customers that your business requires legitimate identification and proof-of-age for purchase of alcohol and tobacco products.
- Never accept fake IDs. If an ID is questionable, require a second form of ID. Only accept state IDs; don't accept expired IDs or non-state IDs such as school IDs. Carefully check the description, photo, and birth date on every ID. Consider confiscating fake IDs and reporting their use to the police.
- Keep alert for 3rd-party sales—an adult purchasing alcohol for a minor.
- Consider the effects of product placement when displaying alcohol and tobacco products.
 - Display alcoholic beverages separately from non-alcoholic beverages such as soda.
 - Attempt to reduce risk of theft, as some youth may attempt to steal alcohol or tobacco products. Store all alcohol products where a person must pass by a purchase counter before leaving the store. Avoid “grab and go” placement of single alcohol or tobacco items that may facilitate theft.
- Role model safe and healthy norms and behaviors.





10. What can YOUTH and UM STUDENTS do to help prevent underage drinking?

- Get involved in prevention efforts at your school, on campus, and in your surrounding community.
- Openly support programming and policies aimed at changing the culture of drinking in Missoula.
- Remind peers about the laws around alcohol.
- Learn about the healthy, safety, and legal risks of underage drinking and how they affect you and your peers.
- Start discussions with peers when you see media promoting healthy or unhealthy drinking norms.
- Plan and promote alcohol-free social, recreational, extracurricular, and/or public service activities for friends.
- If you are of age, do not purchase alcohol for underage peers.
- Approach parents, teachers, or other trusted adults with any questions or concerns you have about alcohol or other drugs, substance use, or local resources. Be a resource for your peers.
- Contribute to healthy norms: Be a role model for a safe and healthy lifestyle.

What can YOU do to help prevent underage drinking?

