Alcohol Myths and Facts

Myths & Misconceptions

- If youth are allowed to practice drinking when they are young, they will get used to it and experience fewer negative consequences from alcohol use when they are older.

- If youth wait until they are 21 to drink, they will go wild and their drinking will get way out of hand when they finally get to drink.

- Everybody drinks in high school. If I don't, I'll be left out.

- In European countries, youth drink at much younger ages and they are fine.

- The underdeveloped or poorest countries of the world are the ones who have more alcohol problems.

- Drinking is on the rise. I need to be exposed to it and learn about it.

- No matter what the legal drinking age, youth are going to drink. There is no stopping them.

Facts & Freedoms

- Youth who use alcohol before the age of 21, even under adult supervision, are more likely to develop alcohol use problems as adults and suffer arrested development.

- Teens who delay alcohol use allow their frontal lobe to develop, unlike those who may suffer arrested development from early substance use. They may still go a little wild when they drink at 21 but will have a fully developed brain that will help them learn from mistakes sooner and make smarter choices regarding alcohol.

- Although many students try it, most do not use it regularly. The adolescents who wait learn how to choose healthier friends and develop refusal skills to stay safe.

- Teens In countries with lower drinking ages drink more but may have taboos against binging. Many European countries have rates of alcohol-related problems equal to, or higher than, the United States.

- People who live in countries with greater economic wealth consume more alcohol and have the highest rates of binge drinking.

- Alcohol use has steadily decreased in the past few decades. About 60% of the world's population age 15 and older are not currently drinking.

- Increasing the legal drinking age to 21 reduces overall rates of drinking, problem drinking, drinking while driving, and alcohol-related crashes.