



Teens and Problem Drinking

by DiscoveryHealth.com writers

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Though it is illegal to drink if you're under 21, many teens do it anyway, and some drink in excess. The following are warning signs of a problem with alcohol:

- Getting drunk on a regular basis
- Getting drunk even when striving not to
- Lying about drinking
- Believing that alcohol is necessary to have fun
- Drinking because of problems or to relax
- Drinking because of anger
- Drinking alone
- Trying to stop drinking and failing
- Having frequent hangovers
- Feeling run-down, depressed or even suicidal
- Having "blackouts" - forgetting what you did while drinking
- Having problems at school or work, or getting in trouble with the law
- Drinking in the morning
- Gulping drinks
- Thinking it's cool to be able to hold your liquor
- Drinking then driving
- Going to school intoxicated

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and other agencies offer support groups nationwide designed especially for teens with drinking problems. At AA, help from peers with similar problems is available on a confidential, free basis. Look in the phone book under Alcoholics Anonymous for chapters in your area, or visit the organization on the Web at www.aa.org. If you have insurance, you may be able to access professional mental health services as well to deal with a drinking problem.

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