



## Hello There!

The stores are already filled with holiday goodies and wrapping paper and I've been browsing for cookie recipes - the holidays can't be far off. There will be delicious food, lavish decorations and in many homes, cupboards filled with alcohol. Not surprising, a recent survey by The Century Council, a national non-profit dedicated to fighting drunk driving and underage drinking, revealed that 65 percent of underage youth say they get alcohol from family and older friends - with or without their permission.

Some parents are even willing accomplices in planning teen parties and turning a blind eye to underage alcohol use in their own homes. They are tempted to host parties for their minor-aged kids and their friends in the mistaken belief that it is a safer option for their kids to drink at home than to drink somewhere else.

There are also adults who think underage drinking is a rite of passage and no big deal. But in New Mexico, it is a very big deal. Under statutes 60-7B-1A and 31-18-15E, it is a fourth degree felony for an adult (18 years or older) to sell or provide alcohol to someone under 21 years of age. A felony conviction can affect your right to: get a job, vote, carry a gun, apply for student loans, and hold public office. You could also receive a fine of up to \$5,000 and spend 18 months in prison.

If the underage teen drinks and drives, the person who provided the alcohol (or knew and looked the other way) may be found legally liable in both criminal and civil courts for any property damage,

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## Rio Arriba County DWI Program Fights Underage Drinking



Dr. Kenneth Moritsugu poses for a photo with students and teachers from the Rio Arriba County DWI Prevention Program.

What makes a great DWI program? It takes a combination of concerned adults, community interest, innovative and proven program curriculum, along with strong links to local schools and a solid funding base. This month we are featuring a program that has all these connections and by working with the local middle schools made it possible for the community's youth to participate in an important event.

In September, New Mexico was honored to host the Acting Surgeon General, Kenneth Moritsugu, who made a presentation on the dangers of underage drinking. Several bus loads of teens from Rio Arriba County were brought to Albuquerque to hear this important speaker. The Rio Arriba County youth program has been working throughout the county since 1986 and serves six public school districts, two charter schools, three academies and one privately based school covering the entire county and all age groups from kindergarten through high school. It was established with funding for "new and innovative programs, services and activities to prevent or reduce the incidence of DWI, alcoholism or alcohol abuse." The county has put in place a number of community-based programs and services for prevention, screening and treatment of alcoholism.

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medical bills, injury or death caused by the teen.

Responsible adults are never a party to teen drinking. For a reminder on New Mexico's law on providing alcohol to people under 21 and what to do for someone who is suffering from alcohol poisoning, download the posters on page four.

And as always, don't drink and drive. Make this holiday a time to remember for all the right reasons!

## Would You Like to Receive AlcoEdu by Email?

It's easy!

Send your email address to: [AlcoEdu@unm.edu](mailto:AlcoEdu@unm.edu) and we'll add it to our listserve.



## Rio Arriba Continued from page 1

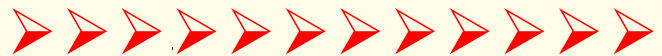
Education is a large segment of the prevention component, which includes ongoing information dissemination in local and surrounding communities each year. Program visits to schools feature prevention strategies that include PowerPoint presentations, and a simulated course with a computer program and fatal vision goggles to demonstrate the driving impairment inherent with alcohol and drug consumption. A new addition at several schools is Protecting You /Protecting Me ([http://www.pypm.org/about\\_us/index.cfm](http://www.pypm.org/about_us/index.cfm)), an evidenced-based curriculum developed by MADD and designated as a Model Program by SAMHSA, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Bringing students to the Surgeon General's "Call to Action" visit to New Mexico became extremely important for the program and to their youth and community. "We felt it was a benefit to our program and to our youth," said Louise Sanchez, CDWI Prevention Specialist. "We had a Proclamation presented before our Board of County Commissioners and it was officially approved on August 30, 2007, stating that the County Commission of Rio Arriba hereby proclaimed the week of September 24-30, 2007 as Underage Drinking Awareness Week." In Rio Arriba County, funding for the DWI Prevention Program comes from the state Department of Finance and Administration and the NMDOT Traffic Safety Bureau through distribution monies specifically set aside to address DWI.

## Let's Talk About It

The "Start Talking Before They Start Drinking Campaign" is striving to combat underage drinking by educating teachers, parents, youth, and other concerned community members on the issue of alcohol abuse. They believe that you can protect children from the risks associated with drinking by maintaining open communication and expressing a clear, consistent message about alcohol. As a teacher, building a close relationship with your kids will make it easier for them to come to you and their parents for help in making decisions that impact their health and well being.

Have your older students read this story on how alcohol affects the brain and discuss it with them. Ask them if partying now is worth possible brain damage later. And how that might affect their futures.



For all your students, show them the following public service announcements about underage drinking and discuss which ones have the most impact on them and why?



Go to: [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/multimedia/star\\_talking.aspx](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/multimedia/star_talking.aspx) to view "Brandon" and "Emily." On the same page under "Additional Resources" view the "Before a Teen Party, Talk About Alcohol" video vignette. The point of all three PSA's is to discourage underage drinking but they handle the message in two very different ways.



"Brandon"



"Emily"

Underage drinking can have very serious consequences including vehicle crashes, violence, sexual assault, problems with work, school, and family relationships, unplanned pregnancy, injury and death.

Do you have some great ideas about how to stop underage drinking and drunk driving in New Mexico? Send us an email at: [AlcoEdu@unm.edu](mailto:AlcoEdu@unm.edu) We'd love to hear from you!

# For Students: How Alcohol Affects Your Brain

An adult brain weighs about 3 pounds. One pound in weight is gained during the adolescent years as the brain grows and develops. Drinking alcohol while the brain is still growing and changing is especially harmful. Unfortunately, by the time students reach the eighth grade, nearly 1/2 have had at least one drink, and 1/5 have been “drunk” according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The 2002 Monitoring the Future Survey reports that 30% of seniors reported drinking five or more drinks in a row in the two weeks before being surveyed. An April 2006 study on alcohol and its effects on the brain by Dartmouth University confirms that repeated alcohol exposure impairs teen brain development.

Listed below are what each part of the brain does and how alcohol affects it.

## Cerebral Cortex

When alcohol reaches the cerebral cortex, its depressing effect lowers inhibitions. You’re likely to talk too loudly, behave stupidly, and lose judgment.

Alcohol also slows down the cerebral cortex as it works with information from your senses. After drinking alcohol, your vision may get blurry and you may slur your words. You may not hear well, and you may have trouble smelling and tasting.

## Central Nervous System

When you think of something you want your body to do, the central nervous system — the brain and the spinal cord — sends a signal to that part of the body. Alcohol slows down the central nervous system, making you think, speak, and move more slowly.

## Frontal Lobes

The brain undergoes a tremendous amount of development during the teen years, including a major remodeling of the frontal lobes, which are involved in planning, decision-making, impulse control and language. When alcohol affects the frontal lobes of the brain, you may find it hard to control urges. You may become violent or act without thinking. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes permanently.

## Hippocampus

The hippocampus is the part of the brain where your memories are made. There is mounting evidence that

repeated exposure to alcohol as a teen leads to long-lasting deficits in cognitive abilities, including learning and memory. When alcohol reaches the hippocampus, you may have trouble remembering something you just learned, such as a name or a phone number. This can happen after just one or two drinks. Drinking a lot of alcohol quickly can cause a blackout—not being able to remember entire events, such as what you did last night. If alcohol damages the hippocampus, you may find it hard to learn and to hold on to knowledge. Heavy alcohol use during the teen years results in poorer memory and attention span when you reach your twenties.

## Cerebellum

The cerebellum is important for coordination, thinking, and being aware. When alcohol goes into the cerebellum your hands may be so uncoordinated that you can’t touch or grab things normally. You may lose your balance and fall.

## Hypothalamus

The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of your body’s housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the hypothalamus’s work. After drinking alcohol,

blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase while body temperature and heart rate decrease.

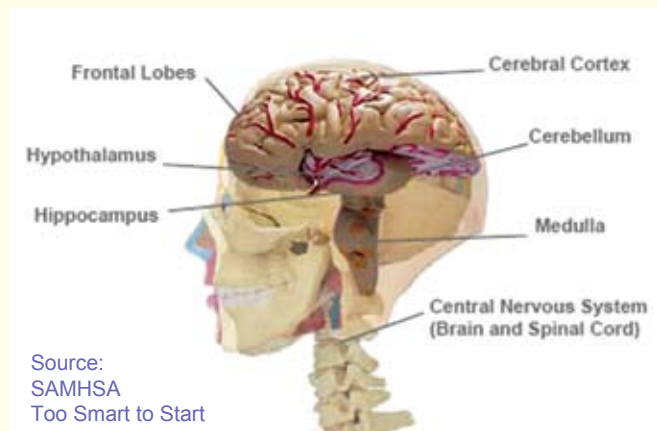
## Medulla

The medulla is your body’s automatic pilot. It keeps your heart beating, lets you breathe without thinking about it, and keeps your body at the right temperature.

By disturbing the medulla, alcohol makes your breathing and heart rate slower and lowers your temperature. If you drink a lot of alcohol in a short time, you can shut down the medulla, fall into a coma and die.

Drinking a lot of alcohol outdoors in cold weather can cause your body temperature to fall below normal. This dangerous condition is called hypothermia and can also result in death.

Brain development decreases as you enter your early 20s. You may not be able to be able to rewire your brain to make up for the damage caused by the alcohol that you drank as a teenager. Why take a chance?



## Web Resources

There are always plenty of free alcohol materials on the web. This issue we have concentrated on what alcohol does to the body. See: [http://www.college.drinkingprevention.gov/CollegeStudents/anatomy/InteractiveBody\\_flash.aspx](http://www.college.drinkingprevention.gov/CollegeStudents/anatomy/InteractiveBody_flash.aspx) for an excellent interactive look at the body and how alcohol affects it.

The Too Smart to Start Youth Pages found at <http://www.toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov/youth/youth.aspx> have memory games and word search and crossword puzzles that reinforce knowledge about alcohol and how it can affect teens.

Go to: <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/> to view a comprehensive portal on federal resources to combat underage drinking that include action guides and PSAs.

And last but not least: [http://parentsempowered.org/resources/fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://parentsempowered.org/resources/fact_sheet.pdf)

# FELONY

In New Mexico it is a Felony to sell or provide alcohol to someone under 21\*

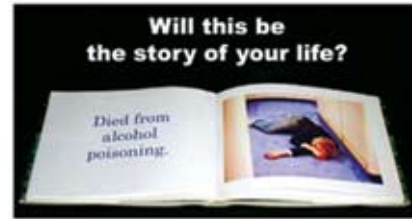


Would you stick your friends with a FELONY for a BEER?

A FELONY CONVICTION CAN AFFECT YOUR RIGHT TO  
 Get a job    Vote    Hold public office  
 Apply for student loans    Carry a gun

\*If you are age 18 or older it is a fourth degree felony to sell or provide alcohol to someone under 21

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Will this be the story of your life?

It doesn't have to be.

### Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning

- Mental confusion, slurred speech - the driver cannot be awakened.
- No response to pinching the skin or earlobe.
- Vomiting while sleeping.
- Seizures.
- Slow breathing - less than eight breaths per minute.
- Irregular breathing - ten seconds or more between breaths.
- Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin - the driver is not getting enough oxygen.

### What to Do

- Call 911. The driver who has "passed out" may die. Alcohol poisoning is a medical emergency. Do not hesitate.
- Turn the driver on his/her side to keep from choking and inhaling vomit.
- Be aware that alcohol continues to be absorbed into the blood stream after a driver "passes out" and may shut down breathing and heart functions causing death within a few hours.
- Monitor breathing and begin artificial respiration if he/she is not breathing.
- Stay with her/him until help arrives.

People die from drinking too much alcohol too fast.



Don't be afraid to seek medical help for someone who has had too much to drink. It's far better to have an annoyed or embarrassed friend than a dead one.



Approved by the NMDOT Public Safety Bureau and the UNM Institute of Public Law.

Download these free posters from:  
<http://ipl.unm.edu/traf/pubs/posters.htm>

We Wish You  
 Happy and Safe Holidays!

The NMDOT Traffic Safety Bureau  
 & the UNM Institute of Public Law

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