

## **DRINKING OFTEN STARTS AT HOME, BRINGING PROBLEMS THAT LAST A LIFETIME**



Two new reports confirm disturbing trends about teen drinking – first, that most underage teens are obtaining alcohol at home, and second, that teen drinking often leads to alcohol dependence in adulthood.

The first report comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), based on data collected from 2006 to 2009 for the National Survey on Drug Abuse and Health. According to SAMHSA’s new report,

about 709,000 kids between the ages of 12 and 14 admitted to drinking alcohol on the survey – and here’s how they got the alcohol:

93.4% said they got alcohol for free

44.8% of the kids who got free alcohol said it was from a family member or from their home

19.6% obtained alcohol for free from another underage person

13.5% got free alcohol from an unrelated adult

6.8% obtained from someone else’s home

Approximately 111,000 kids said they got alcohol from a parent or guardian

When parents and adults knowingly or unknowingly allow kids to obtain alcohol, they are taking enormous risks that can affect teens long into adulthood. According to SAMHSA administrator, Pamela Hyde, “People who begin drinking alcohol before the age of 15 are six times more likely than those who start at age 21 or older to develop alcohol problems.”

The lasting damage of adolescent drinking is the subject of a new study that will be published in the May 2011 issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*. The study is based on the Rutgers Alcohol Problem Index (RAPI), which is a widely used method for assessing adolescent drinking-related problems. However, this is the first study in which RAPI scores were used to accurately predict alcoholism later in life.

As the study’s lead author, Richard R. Rose of Indiana University, said “The key finding was that the more drinking-related problems experienced by an adolescent at age 18, the greater the likelihood that the adolescent would be diagnosed with alcoholism seven years later at age 25.” Rose went on to say that the study’s results confirm the need for early identification and intervention for adolescents with elevated risk for drinking problems.

### Sources:

“Why problem drinking during adolescence is never a phase,” *Science Daily*, February 15, 2011.

“Many kids get alcohol from family members,” *webmd.com*, February 17, 2011.

“Most young teens who drink get alcohol for free,” *myhealthnewsdaily.com*, February 17, 2011