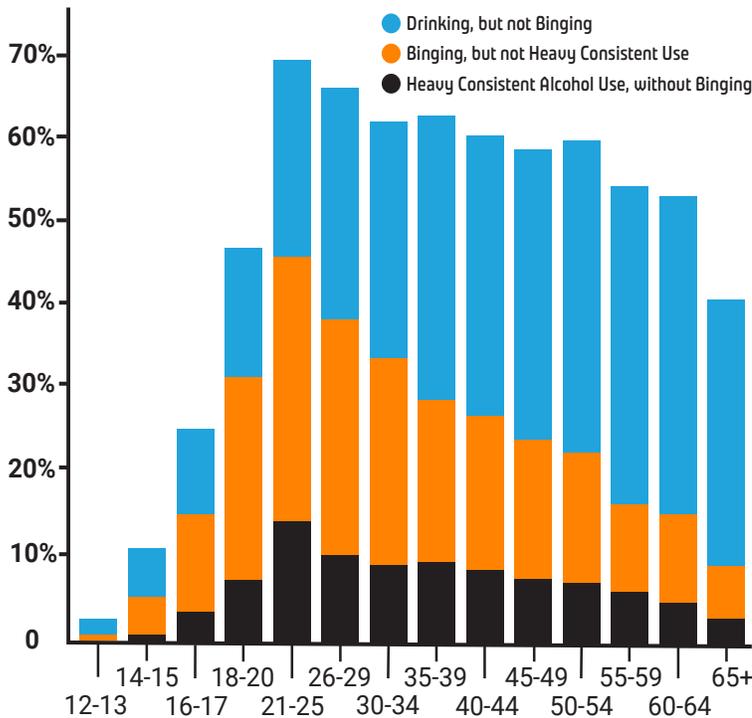


# Alcohol Facts & Stats



## Drinking & Binging, by Age



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2003). National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: epidemiology of Alcohol Use and Deviant Drinking.

**Underage drinking increases the likelihood of other high-risk issues, including unprotected sex, academic problems, abnormal sleep patterns, auto accidents, and death.**

**22%**

of youth wait until they are of legal age to try alcohol.

**15%**

of youth meet criteria for substance use disorder before age 18.

## The Silent Majority

Even though alcohol is the most abused substance by adolescents, it is a mistaken belief that 'everyone is doing it'. According to decades of surveys, many underage youth experiment with alcohol 1-3 times. However, the majority do not go on to use alcohol until they are of age. Depending upon cultural norms, the number of youth who engage in regular alcohol use is a minority.

Sadly, the abstainers stay quiet even though they are in the majority, while the noisy minority may boast about and glamorize drinking. Are you assertive about your non-drinking values? Why or why not? Are there obstacles in the way of feeling proud of abstaining from alcohol?

## Myths vs. Facts

**Myth #1** Youth who are supervised by adults when underage drinking get used to drinking and have positive outcomes.

**Fact #1** Children who drink under the age of 21, even under supervision, are more likely to develop alcohol use problems as adults and suffer arrested development.

**Myth #2** In European countries, youth drink at much younger ages, and they are fine.

**Fact #2** Youth in countries with lower drinking ages drink more but may have taboos that prohibit binge drinking. Many European countries have rates of alcohol-related problems equal to, or higher than, the United States.

**Myth #3** The underdeveloped or poorest countries are the ones who have more alcohol problems.

**Fact #3** People who live in countries with greater economic wealth consume more alcohol and have the highest rates of binge and problem drinking.