

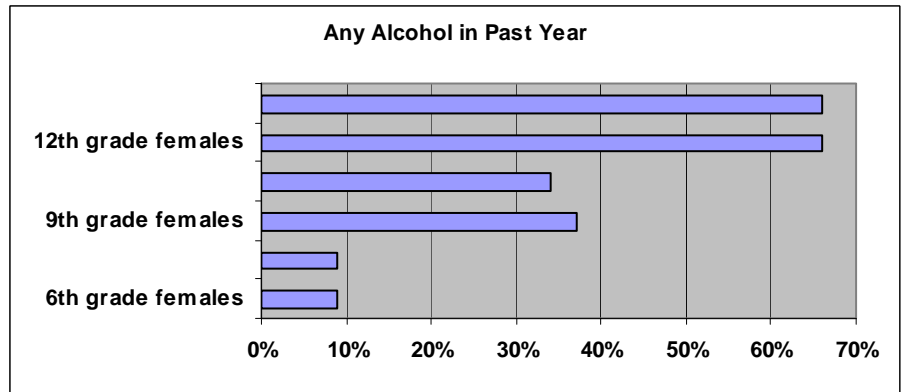
How are the Children?



Suburban Ramsey
Family Collaborative

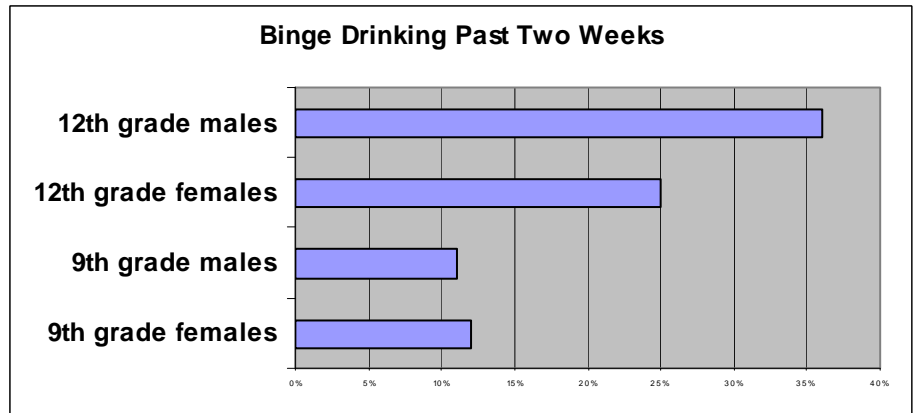
Tips for Parents & Caring Adults: **Worried about Under-age Drinking?**

Are you worried that your child may start or already be drinking? Data from the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS)¹ confirms that many Suburban Ramsey County children and young people are drinking alcohol.



As concerning as these statistics may be, they also show that many of our young people are choosing NOT to drink alcohol. Nine out of 10 6th graders, two out of three 9th graders, and one out of three 12th graders have not had any alcohol in the past year.

Teens drink less often than adults. But, when they do drink, they drink more than adults. This chart shows the percentage of Suburban Ramsey County young people who had five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks at the time of the survey.



What Parents & Caring Adults Can Do:

- Don't wait to start talking to your child about your family values and rules about alcohol use. One in ten Suburban Ramsey County youth start drinking at age 10. Research shows that most 6 year olds know that alcohol is only for adults but, between the ages of 9 and 13, young people begin to think more positively about alcohol.



- **Be aware of the rates of alcohol use.** Research shows that only 31% of parents of 15-16 years olds believe their child had a drink in the past year, when 60% of teens in this age group reported drinking.
- **Remind your child that many young people their age are NOT drinking.** Research shows that young people tend to overestimate how many of and how much their peers are drinking. Be aware that as your child gets older and more of their peers are drinking, they may need more support and strategies for saying no.
- **Do everything you can to delay the onset of alcohol use.** Most young people who start drinking before the age of 21 do so when they are about 13-14 years old. Youth who report drinking before the age of 15 are more likely than those who begin drinking later in life to have been involved in other risky behavior including substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, car accidents, unintentional injuries, and physical fights. This is true for individuals from families both with and without a family history of alcohol dependence.
- **Talk to your kids.** Even in their teen years, research shows as parents you have enormous influence on your children's behavior. Parents' disapproval of youthful alcohol use is the key reason children choose not to drink. Be the 'fall guy' for your kids. Help them come up with ways to refuse to drink. "My parents would ground me for life if I tried that."
- **Control access to alcohol in your home.** Nationally, 64% of 8th graders said alcohol was "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get. Most young people get alcohol from someone they know: friends, at parties, at home, from their friends' home, etc.

Additional Resources:

For more tips on how to talk with your child about alcohol, visit <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/children.pdf> to download a copy of *Make a Difference: Talk to your child about alcohol* published by the National Institute of Health, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Revised 2006.

For downloadable resources, including discussion questions for connecting with kids, visit <http://nmhicstore.samhsa.gov/15plus/pubs.aspx>.

For more information:

To learn what you can do to support the health, learning, safety and security of all Suburban Ramsey County children and young people, contact:

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Citations:

- 1: MSS Data for Suburban Ramsey County compiled by The Improve Group for SRFC.
- 2: *Make a Difference: Talk to your child about alcohol*, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Revised 2007.

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