

ALCOHOL

Submitted by Mrs. Villanueva

With high school graduations just around the corner, now is a good time to remind everyone – Young Marines, parents, and our supporters alike – of the dangers of alcohol.

Alcohol is a **depressant**, which means it slows the function of the central nervous system. Alcohol actually blocks some of the messages trying to get to the brain. This alters a person's perceptions, emotions, movement, vision, and hearing.

Reaction times are slowed dramatically - which is why people are told not to drink and drive. People who are intoxicated may think they're moving properly when they're not.

When large amounts of alcohol are consumed in a short period of time, **alcohol poisoning** can result. Alcohol poisoning is exactly what it sounds like - the body has become poisoned by large amounts of alcohol. Violent vomiting is usually the first symptom of alcohol poisoning, as the body tries to rid itself of the alcohol. Extreme sleepiness, unconsciousness, difficulty breathing, dangerously low blood sugar, seizures, and even death may result.

How Can A Young Marine Avoid Drinking?

Different strategies for turning down alcohol work for different people. Some people find it helps to say no without giving an explanation, others think offering their reasons works better ("I'm a Young Marine – Young Marines don't drink or do drugs," "I have a game tomorrow," or "my uncle died from drinking," for example).

Peer pressure can be enormous and difficult to overcome. Use your parents or another adult as a reason for your refusal. Saying, "My parents are coming to pick me up soon," or "my coach would kill me," can make saying no a bit easier for some.

Hang around with other Young Marines and friends who DON'T drink. Involve yourself in family, school, church, and Young Marines as much as possible. These groups will give you opportunities to build your self-esteem and provide you with a strong support system.

How Can An Adult Help A Teen Avoid Drinking?

Teens who have strong self-esteem are less likely to drink than teens with low self-esteem. Making sure your teen is actively involved in an organization such as Young Marines will help them develop strong self-esteem.

If you are a parent – talk to your kids REPEATEDLY about the dangers of alcohol. You must, must, must give them the message again and again. Other adults – grandparents, coaches, teachers, and other community members - should give the teens they know the same message. Ongoing communication between adults and teens in regards to alcohol is essential in reducing and preventing underage drinking.