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National Facts on Adolescent Alcohol Use and Abuse

- ❖ 1.5 million adolescents (6.1% were aged 12 to 17) were classified as needing alcohol treatment in the past year and about 111,000 adolescents (7.2%) of those needing alcohol treatment received specialty treatment for alcohol in the last year.¹
- ❖ Employed adolescents were more likely than adolescents who were not employed to have used alcohol (35% vs. 24%), and to have engaged in binge alcohol use (25% vs. 27%).²
- ❖ In 2003, an estimated 9 million (36.1%) adolescents aged 12 to 17 had engaged in at least one delinquent behavior in the past year as a result of drug and alcohol abuse.³
- ❖ Over three quarters of students (77%) have consumed alcohol by the end of high school; nearly half of these students (46%) have tried drinking by the 8th grade and more than half (58%) of 12th grade students and 20% of 8th grade students report they have been drunk at least once in their life.⁴
- ❖ Approximately 95% of older teenagers, under the age of 21, report that it is very easy for them to obtain alcohol illegally.⁴
- ❖ Binge drinking (having more than four drinks in a row) appears to be on the decline among teens, although the majority of older adolescents do not view weekend binge drinking as dangerous.⁴
- ❖ Popular alcoholic beverages among young people include beer, wine, wine coolers and hard liquor. More than half of 12th graders (56%) have tried "alcopops," which are flavored alcoholic beverages.⁴

The Face of Adolescent Alcohol Dependence at Caron^{5,6}

- ❖ Almost one in five patients (19.5%) under the age of 20 years are admitted to Caron Treatment Centers for treatment of alcohol.
- ❖ Adolescent males account for almost two-thirds (61.4%) of Caron's adolescent alcohol-dependent patients.
- ❖ Adolescent alcohol-dependent patients at Caron generally report they initiated alcohol use between 13 to 14 years of age, although some patients have reported use as young as 8 years old.
- ❖ One in four alcohol dependent adolescent patients at Caron have histories of emotional problems and approximately 15% have had suicidal thoughts while under the influence of alcohol.
- ❖ Female teenage patients in treatment for alcohol dependence are more likely than male patients to have histories of injuring themselves.

Special Topic: Drinking and Driving - A Deadly Combination

- ❖ Each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking, 1,900 (38%) being from motor vehicle crashes.⁷
- ❖ Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 20 years. In addition, the rate of fatal car crashes among alcohol-involved adolescents is more than twice the rate for alcohol-involved drivers over the age of 21.⁸
- ❖ Most fatalities associated with adolescent inebriated drivers are the drivers themselves (60.2%), followed by passengers (36.2%) and then non-occupants (3.5%), such as pedestrians or people in other vehicles.⁹
- ❖ Young people will consume an average of five alcoholic beverages prior to driving.¹⁰
- ❖ In a one-month period nearly one in three students (30.2%) report that they have ridden in a car one or more times with a driver who has been drinking alcohol.¹⁰