

# Is lowering the drinking age a good idea?

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Should teenagers be allowed to drink just because they turn eighteen and are now legally adults? Well, they do in Colorado. In 2009 there were over 10.8 million underage drinkers in the United States alone (Snyder). Alcoholism affects so many people in the United States, but every state has different laws regarding what the legal age should really be. Many people say once they turn 18 they should be able to do whatever they want. They are able to be drafted for war, vote for the president of the United States, pay bills on their own, have cars in their own name, etc. So why not be able to drink? The drinking age has become a more controversial issue lately. More than two decades ago, people under the age of 21 were allowed to drink ("NYRA Debates . . ."). But, that all changed. The minimum drinking age became 21 because of the National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984. This law told states to enact a minimum drinking age of 21 or lose up to ten percent of their federal highway funding. After this law was enforced, states quickly jumped to enforcing the laws (Trex). Although in most states, the legal drinking age is 21, teens are still allowed to drink under this age, regarding some circumstances. In Colorado, if someone is under 21, they are legally allowed to drink if their parent or guardian gives them permission. They must be under supervision of their parent or guardian and also be on private property ("Drinking Age..."). This can be a problem because this is why teens think it is okay to drink. Their parents let them do it, so when they get caught, (if they were to get caught) they would not care and just keep doing it more. Young adults under the age of 21 should not be allowed to drink for many reasons. One of the biggest debates on the drinking age is whether or not teens are mentally mature

enough to drink by the time they turn 18. Most teens just drink to drink. They do not know when to stop. This is called binge drinking. Unlike some adults, who would sit around and drink with friends to have a good time, teens sit around a table and have quite a few drinks, until they are completely hammered. This shows how irresponsible some teens can be. Some parents argue that when adolescents are not taught to drink in moderation, they end up binge drinking when they do consume alcohol. It is better to teach youth to learn how to drink responsibly and hold them accountable for their actions as we do with driving ("Should the Drinking Age..."). Statistics show that 5,000 people, under the age of 21 die from underage drinking every year. A shocking 1,900 deaths are from drinking and driving (Snyder). Teens think that it is just all fun and games because they are drinking and having a good time. They do not realize that when they are making the decision to drive after they drink, that innocent lives are being put in danger. Some of the deaths that are caused from poor choices, such as drinking and driving, take innocent human beings lives. Not only do teens make poor decisions about drinking and driving, but they also make poor decisions with the things they do. People feel the need to drink in tough situations because alcohol is a depressant. It temporarily slows down your central nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord), which controls your bodily functions, blocking out some of the messages trying to get through to your brain. This is why people that are normally not aggressive, get violent when they drink. They are not in control of their own body; therefore they tend to do something they would later regret. Some may argue that they do not get aggressive no matter what, so why should it be illegal for everyone under 21 to drink? Well, this

leads to a whole different argument. Addictions. The younger someone starts drinking the more likely they are to become addicted to alcohol when they get older. The legal drinking age should not be changed to 18 is because drinking can lead to very severe addictions. Addictions can be caused by genes, mental illnesses, social environment, childhood trauma, or from an early use of drugs. Dr. Mark Willenbring says, " The kids most likely to get addicted are the ones who also have other problems. " 40 percent of people who start drinking before they are fifteen years old develop alcoholism. Even though kids Dutton 4 that start drinking before they are fifteen develops alcoholism sooner in life, it can still develop in teens that start drinking even at the age of 18 (Dewan). How a person acts in school often determines how they will be the rest of their life. So if teens are out drinking and partying, they will academically suffer. Because of all of the hype that some teens think there is about drinking, they will go out on the weekends and get trashed. Often they will even get drunk on school nights and come to school either hung-over or still drunk. This kind of thing will completely destroy teens academically, which results in them not being about to get a good education or job. Teen drinking will ultimately lead to irresponsible adults. The drinking age should not be lowered to 18 for many reasons. High school students that have never drank throughout their whole high school career seem to have a better future and did not tend to struggle in school as much as those teens that drank every weekend just to have a good time. If the drinking age was lowered there could be many teens that drop out of school, either during high school or during college. Some of these teens that party every weekend do not know how to control themselves and could later

become alcoholics. The poor choice of drinking all the time, could eventually lead to teens doing stupid things and making very poor choices when they are intoxicated.