



May 2010

www.dwiresourcecenter.org

## Connect With Us On:

[www.facebook.com/dwiresourcecenter](http://www.facebook.com/dwiresourcecenter)  
[www.twitter.com/DWlresource](http://www.twitter.com/DWlresource)  
[www.dwiresourcecenter.wordpress.com](http://www.dwiresourcecenter.wordpress.com)

### Teens Expect Drinking and Driving on Prom Night, Survey Says

A survey of 11th- and 12th-grade students finds that 90 percent believe that their peers are more likely to drink and drive on prom night, but few think that the behavior carries a high degree of risk, USA Today reported April 9.

The survey of more than 2,500 students, conducted by Liberty Mutual and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), found that 79 percent of students expected their classmates to drink and drive on graduation night. More than one in three students also said their parents had let them attend a party knowing that alcohol would be served.

"Newspapers, television, YouTube and Facebook are rife with tales of tragedy from reckless driving on prom and graduation nights, yet an 'it won't happen to me' attitude continues to be so pervasive among our teens," said Dave Melton of the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety. "Add to the alcohol factor distractions like texting or talking on the cellphone while driving, or the greater likelihood of multiple people in the car, and the crash potential is very real."

### Memorial Day Weekend Through Labor Day

#### The 101 Deadliest Days on the Road and How to Survive Them

The statistics are tragic, but true. More Americans die on the nation's highways during the summer than during any other time of the year. The period between the Saturday before Memorial Day and Labor Day sees more drivers on the road, and more deaths related to automobiles.

The dangers are real, but so are your chances for survival when you implement strategies that protect you while you're behind the wheel.

Traffic deaths peak three times during the 101 days – Memorial Day weekend, the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, and Labor Day weekend. That alone marks the 101 days as a time for special caution: **The average number of traffic deaths during holiday periods are 156 per day compared to 117 per day on non-holidays** (NCSA, Research Note March, 2004, DOT HS 809 718).

**Most fatal crashes happen on two-lane, undivided highways and occur between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.** Most fatal crashes involving alcohol occur between midnight and 3 a.m.

#### You CAN stay safe

The good news is there are smart strategies that can drastically increase families' chances of avoiding or surviving a crash this summer, as the family stories here illustrate. Some are basic good habits, such as buckling up and not drinking and driving. Others include avoiding late night driving marathons with children and not giving new drivers excessive driving privileges all at once just because summer is here.

Continued...

- **Don't drink and drive** – even short distances. Drivers who have been drinking have higher crash rates even if they don't exceed the legal limit. You can be convicted of alcohol-impaired driving even if you are under the legal blood alcohol concentration of .08 to .10 percent if there are other indications that your driving is impaired.
- **Keep your family off the road in the wee hours.** Avoid driving all night to cover more ground while the children are asleep: It puts you at the greatest risk of encountering a drunk driver.
- **Have a plan.** When you take your family to a barbecue or party where you know you will be drinking, arrange for a designated driver to drive your family home or car pool with another family.
- **Give teens greater driving privileges gradually,** as they gain experience – not all at once, just because it's summer.
- **Eat when drinking.** Eating items high in protein such as meat, cheese and nuts, will aid in slowing the body's absorption of alcohol.
- **Don't mix pharmaceuticals and alcohol.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist about alcohol and drug interactions and follow any given directions.
- **Don't be deceived.** The average glass of wine, mixed drink, straight liquor, bottle of beer or can of beer contains almost the same quantity of pure alcohol and will all read the same on a breathalyzer.
- **Keep your eyes on the road** in the direction the car is moving at all times.
- **Do not use a cell phone while driving.** If you must, place the call only when stopped.
- **Ask front seat passengers to change CDs,** wait until you are stopped, or invest in a multiple CD-changer.
- **If you must eat in the car, pack along finger foods** that are small pieces and won't dribble, drip or leak. Have them someplace easy to reach or handed to you. If you stop for food, avoid the drive-thru; instead, take a break and eat at a table.
- **Drinks in the car should be in spill-proof containers** that fit your beverage holders. Use a straw to keep both eyes on the road even if both hands are not on the wheel.
- **Establish rules, rewards and consequences with children** for disruptive and good behavior before a road trip.
- **Pull off the road to deal with a disciplinary situation.**
- **If a child is crying but otherwise fine** and stopping is not an option, turn up the radio, breathe deeply, and remember that your job is to focus on driving.
- **Secure items that move or roll around** the car and distract you from driving.

### FASD Kids at Higher Risk of Epilepsy, Study Finds

Six percent of children who had Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) later developed epilepsy, compared to a rate of less than one percent in the general population, according to researchers at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Study author James Reynolds and colleagues studied 425 individuals ages 2-49 and found that epilepsy risk was highest among those who had been exposed to alcohol in the first trimester or throughout their mother's pregnancy.

## Young Female Drinkers More Likely to Develop Breast Disease, Researchers Say

Risk of developing benign breast disease increases five-fold among women who drank alcohol six or seven days a week during their teens and early 20s, according to research from the National Cancer Institute.

Benign breast disease is a known risk factor for breast cancer, researchers noted. Symptoms include hard lumps in the breasts, irregular cysts, breast discomfort, sensitive nipples, and itching.

Reuters reported April 12 that researcher Catherine Berkey of Harvard Medical School and colleagues drew their conclusions from a study of about 6,900 women ages 16-23. About one percent of the women reported having benign breast disease in a followup study at ages 18-27.

"Our study results give older girls and adolescents another reason to avoid alcohol," said Berkey.

## Want Heart Benefits from Moderate Drinking? Quit Smoking

A number of studies have found that light or moderate drinking may promote coronary health, but any such benefits are wiped out by smoking, HealthDay News reported April 13.

Researcher Yangmei Li of the Institute of Public Health at the University of Cambridge, England, and colleagues tracked the drinking and smoking histories of more than 22,500 U.K. residents. They found that light-to-moderate drinking protected against stroke among non-smokers, but not among smokers.

"Smoking may modify [the] relationship between alcohol and stroke risk," the authors concluded.

The study also agreed with previous research finding that heavy drinking does not protect against stroke and may well increase the risk of stroke.

## UK Bar Owners Face Jail Time for Drink Specials

Bars in the U.K. are being banned from running "all you can drink" specials, and owners who violate the new rules could face six months in prison and more than \$30,000 in fines, the Telegraph reported April 6.

Promotions like free drinks for women and speed-drinking contests also would be banned. Gimmicks involving pouring drinks into patrons' mouths will be prohibited, and bars will be required to provide free water to customers upon demand.

Starting in October, bar owners will be required to check the IDs of anyone who looks under age 18, and bars will have to offer smaller serving sizes for those who want to drink less.

The new rules are designed to stem the rise in binge drinking in the U.K., which has accelerated since the government began allowing 24-hour alcohol service in 2003

## Socializing With Heavy Drinkers Increases Alcohol Consumption

The amount of alcohol you consume seems to be directly related to the drinking habits of your social group, according to a new study.

HealthDay News reported April 5 that researchers focused on data from 12,000 participants in the Framingham Heart Study, who were asked about their drinking and social networks over the 30-year span of the study. They found that those who had friends or relatives who drank heavily were 50 percent more likely to drink heavily themselves.

Moreover, even three degrees of separation -- having friends of friends who drank heavily -- appeared to influence individual alcohol consumption.

The opposite also was true -- people who were friends with abstinent individuals were less likely to drink themselves. The results only held true for family and friends, however, not coworkers or nearby neighbors.

"We know from alcoholism treatment that you want to stay away from people who have drinking problems if you have a drinking problem," said alcohol researcher Marc Galanter of the New York University School of Medicine. "AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] says just to sever your ties with those people to be sure that you stay abstinent."

"In addition to working with individuals who are drinking more than is good for them, we need to come up with new ways to address this on more of a public health level, looking at groups of people and some of the settings in which they congregate and reinforce each other's drinking habits," added Ralph Manchester, director of the University Health Service at the University of Rochester in New York.

## State Governments Neglect Beer Taxes

With colored-coded maps published online, Marin Institute illustrates how inflation has decreased the value of low beer taxes, while state budget shortfalls have exploded.

"Amazingly, six states have not raised beer taxes in more than fifty years," stated Marin Institute's Research and Policy Director Michele Simon. "More than half the states have not raised beer excise taxes in at least two decades. Legislators are ignoring a lot of revenue their states could use right now." The alcohol industry watchdog calls their new maps tool Neglected and Outdated State Beer Taxes. It compares for each state the number of years since last tax increase and the real value decline due to not keeping up with inflation.

Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wyoming have not passed a beer tax increase in 50 years or more. Astonishingly, in 47 states, the decrease in real value of the current beer tax (due to inflation) ranges from 25 percent to over 75 percent. Included with the maps is a handy table that chronicles all the data state-by-state including current beer tax rates.

"This is graphic proof that Big Alcohol lobbying efforts are extremely effective at preventing sound public policy and balanced state budgets," said Michael Scippa, advocacy director at Marin Institute. "Their well-funded influence peddling is especially effective when coupled with generous campaign contributions."

"We hope state legislatures and governors looking for alternatives to draconian cuts to budgets and services will use this data," Simon added. "Then enact long-overdue increases to beer taxes and index them to inflation to prevent future losses."

## Blood Test Could Identify Heavy Drinkers

Analysis of protein changes in the blood could be used to distinguish heavy drinkers from light and moderate alcohol consumption, ANI reported March 24.

Researchers working with lab primates identified 17 proteins that changed in the presence of alcohol and used them to classify individuals as non-drinkers, light drinkers (up to two drinks daily) and heavy drinkers (six or more drinks daily).

"We observed that the levels of some proteins increased or decreased with as little as one or two drinks a day. These same changes occurred with heavier levels of drinking," said researcher Willard M. Freeman of the Penn State College of Medicine. "We also found other proteins that responded only to heavy levels of drinking. Combined, these proteins allow us to classify subjects into non-drinking, alcohol-using, and alcohol-abusing groups."

Added Freeman: "Unlike routine testing for illicit drugs, you can't just look for a trace of alcohol because many people enjoy a drink in a responsible manner and alcohol is very quickly metabolized. Discriminating between excessive and responsible levels of drinking makes this a greater challenge."

## State Can Ban Alcohol Ads In College Newspapers, Court Rules

The state of Virginia's alcohol regulatory board was within its rights to ban college newspapers from running alcohol-related advertising, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has ruled.


Inside Higher Ed reported April 12 that the court ruled 2-1 to reverse a lower-court decision that had favored the student newspapers at Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia. The newspapers, The Collegiate Times and the Cavalier Daily, had sued the state over the ban, which they said violated the First Amendment and would cost them \$30,000 in ad revenues annually.

The Virginia alcohol board said the ban was needed to prevent illegal underage drinking and other dangerous alcohol use by college students. The majority on the appeals court agreed.

"[A]lcohol vendors want to advertise in college student publications. It is counterintuitive for alcohol vendors to spend their money on advertisements in newspapers with relatively limited circulation, directed primarily at college students, if they believed that these ads would not increase demand by college students," according to the decision. "The college newspapers fail to provide evidence to specifically contradict this link or to recognize the distinction between ads in mass media and those in targeted local media."

In 2004, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit threw out a similar ban in Pennsylvania, noting that college students would still be exposed to large amounts of alcohol advertising even if ads in school newspapers were banned.

The ACLU of Virginia, which represented the schools in the latest case, said an appeal was possible.



**DWI**  
Resource Center, Inc.

**About Us**

The DWI Resource Center is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 New Mexico organization formed to reduce the social and economic impact of DWI through public awareness, education, prevention programs and research. The Center also provides assistance to victims and serves as a central clearinghouse of information on DWI and victims' rights.

**Research and Statistics**  
**Public Policy & Law**  
**Victims' Rights Legal Assistance Project**  
**Court Monitoring**  
**Drug-Free Workplace Programs**  
**Retailers For Responsibility**  
**Victim Impact Panels**

For more information about the Center or to make a contribution, please call us at (505) 881-1084, or visit our website at [www.dwiresourcecenter.org](http://www.dwiresourcecenter.org).