



## **News you can use...from your EAP**

### **Preventing binge drinking in teens and college students**

With teens and college students returning to school, parents must be aware of the dangers of binge drinking. Binge drinking is generally defined as having five or more drinks of alcohol (male), or 4 or more drinks (female), in about two hours.

According to the most recent statistics from the Center of Disease Control, 26% of 9th through 12th graders reported binge drinking at least once during the past 30 days. The prevalence of binge drinking was nearly the same for females as males. On college campuses, the most recent Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study estimates that approximately 44% of college students are binge drinkers.

### **What are the risks of binge drinking?**

The dangers of binge drinking are far more serious than hangovers. These risks include: alcohol poisoning, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, unintentional injuries (e.g. motor vehicle accidents, falls, burns, drowning and hypothermia) and violence (homicide, suicide, domestic violence and sexual assault). In 2000, the *Journal of American College Health* reported that college students who frequently binge drink were 21 times more likely than non-binge drinkers to:

- Be hurt or injured
- Drive a car after drinking
- Engage in unprotected sex
- Engage in unplanned sexual activity

### **What parents can do**

Parenting experts recommend discussing alcohol and drinking with your child from a young age. A large body of research shows that, contrary to popular opinion, even during the teen years, parents have an enormous influence on their children's behaviors, values and decisions about drinking. One recent study reported that mother-teen conversations about alcohol and the consequences of drinking were helpful in preventing binge drinking in college freshman. To help prevent binge drinking, parenting experts recommend that parents communicate about alcohol and the consequences of drinking and establish clear and firm family expectations about alcohol or other substance use. Search the internet or visit your local library or book store for resources with strategies for communicating to your child about alcohol, ways to spot warning signs of potential drinking problems and the necessary actions to help teens resist alcohol.

### **Your EAP is here to help**

To obtain no cost counseling or other EAP services, please call **800-869-0276** or securely request services from the Member Access section of the EAP website:

[www.eapconsultants.com](http://www.eapconsultants.com)