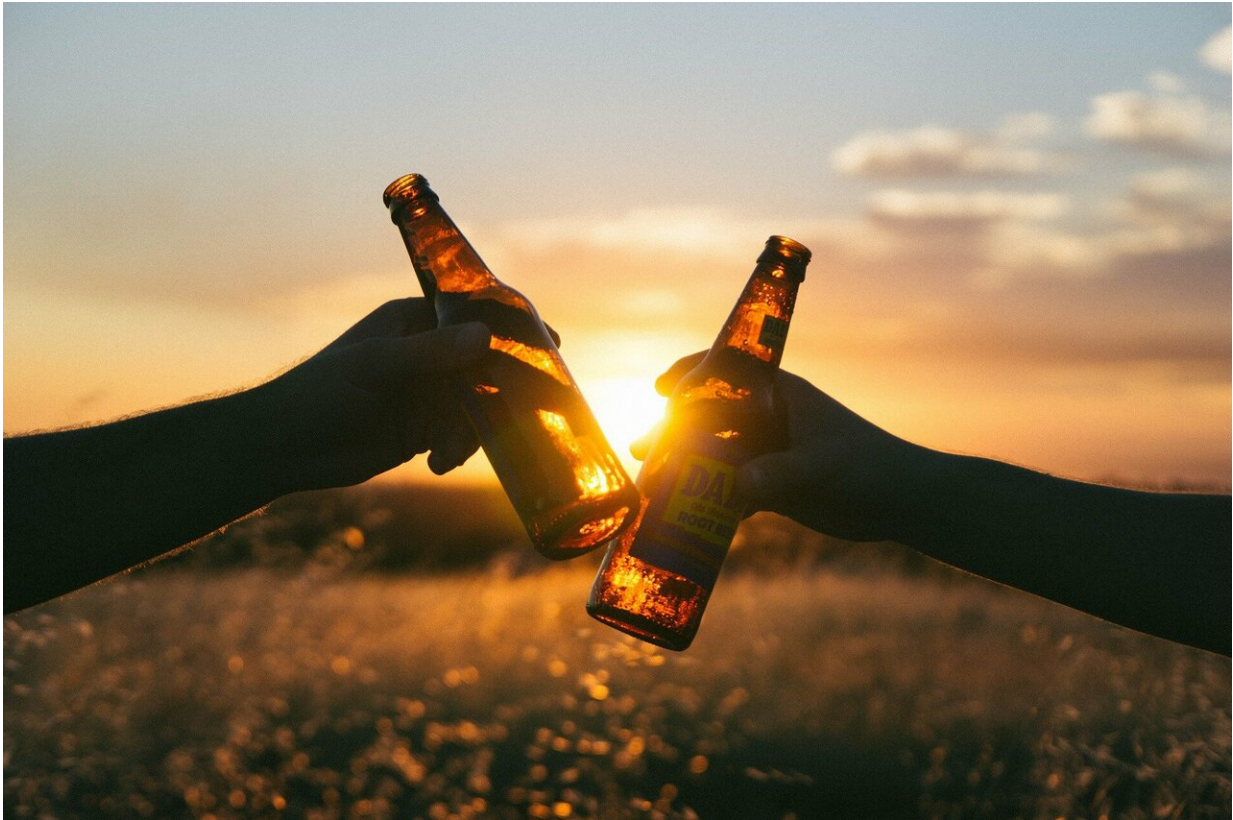


Prevention of alcohol use in older teens

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A recently released publication in the journal *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, "Prevention of Alcohol Use in Older Teens: A Randomized Trial of an Online Family Prevention Program," reveals successful results for an online, family-based prevention program, Smart Choices 4 Teens, which is designed to reduce alcohol use among 16 and 17-year

old teens.

To test whether Smart Choices 4 Teens works, 411 families were randomly assigned to either the program or to a control condition. Based on data collected six months after the intervention, Smart Choices 4 Teens decreased [alcohol use](#) and [alcohol-related problems](#) for teens. Using a dosage model analysis that reflects whether the amount of program completion is related to outcomes, the following outcomes were significant at the six-month follow-up:

- Teens drank fewer days and less alcohol over the last six months.
- Teens drank fewer days and less alcohol over the last 30 days.
- Teens reported less drunkenness and less binge-drinking during the past 30 days.
- Teens reported less parent and [teen](#) communication that it is OK to drink.
- Higher program dosage was related to more parent and teen-reported communication about social host laws.

After 12 months, the following outcomes were related to the amount of program completed:

- Teens drank fewer days and consumed less alcohol over the past 30 days.
- Teens consumed less alcohol over a six-month period
- Teens reported less drunkenness over the past six months.

Using another statistical model referred to as Intention-to-Treat (comparing all families in the experimental group to all families in the control group, regardless of whether the families in the experimental group initiated the program), statistically significant outcomes were found for the Smart Choices 4 Teens at the six-month follow-up:

- Teens in the experimental group reported fewer friends who had been drunk.
- Parents in the experimental group reported more communication about social host laws.

These results indicate that this web-based delivery of a parent-teen [prevention program](#), Smart Choices 4 Teens, reduces teen alcohol use and risk factors for teen alcohol use. Engaging families in program completion is particularly important in a family-based [prevention](#) strategy, and this program supported both parents and teens engaging in the materials with off-line guided family discussions. Given the limited alcohol prevention programs available for older teens, Smart Choices 4 Teens fills an important gap in the health promotion efforts directed toward teenage alcohol use.

Says lead author, Dr. Hilary Byrnes of the Prevention Research Center: "Findings indicate that Smart Choices 4 Teens works and show that a family-based web approach to [alcohol](#) prevention is relevant for older teens. Future research should focus on strategies to encourage families to engage in and complete prevention programming."

More information: Hilary F. Byrnes et al, Prevention of alcohol use in older teens: A randomized trial of an online family prevention program., *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* (2019). [DOI: 10.1037/adb0000442](https://doi.org/10.1037/adb0000442)

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