What’s Going on in YOUR NOGGIN? THE ALCOHOL EFFECT

Your brain is the hardworking, imaginative, decision-making powerhouse of ALL THE THINGS. It helps you study, show kindness, play sports, remember the words to that weird YouTube song, and . . . make some seriously tough choices!

Cerebral Cortex
Questions risks and makes decisions.
Alcohol Might Make Me: Do or say something I REALLY should not.

Medulla
Makes sure organs are up to code.
Alcohol Might Make Me: Lose control of how to move, swallow, or even breathe well.

Central Nervous System
Carries messages from the brain to the rest of the body.
Alcohol Might Make Me: Talk, walk, or react to things MUCH more slowly (or not at all).

Hypothalamus
Checks on body functions and abilities.
Alcohol Might Make Me: Feel too hot, too cold, too hungry, unable to control urination. Yikes.

Hippocampus
Keeps emotions in check and preserves memories and information.
Alcohol Might Make Me: Forget important information I need or even things I love.

To learn more about the impact of alcohol on your brain, check out this other cool infographic: www.asklistenlearn.org/materials/school-nurse
You’re at a sleepover at your BFF Avery’s house. You’re hanging in the basement, Netflix is on, popcorn is flowing, and the gang is giggling. Avery’s parents are asleep upstairs. She opens a cabinet full of alcohol. Avery suggests everyone have a drink. You really don’t want to.

The Risks of Underage Drinking
(Circle one or more)

WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?

• Friends negatively judging you.

• Gossip—you don’t want other people to know that you drank alcohol.

• What alcohol will do to your body! The mental and physical risks are dangerous.

• Avery’s parents finding out (and, of course, telling your parents).

• Not understanding all the risks that come with underage drinking (you know there are a ton). You could get in big trouble, too.

• Feeling out of control.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

WHAT ELSE CONCERNS YOU?

SMART WAYS TO SAY “NO”

Be blunt, but honest. Keep your cool, and you’ll be fine!

“No, thanks. I have practice tomorrow. Drinking will make me too tired.”

“I ate too much popcorn. Drinking will only make it worse.”

“That’s nothing but trouble. I’m good with binge-watching!”
Growing up means facing all kinds of hurdles, including ones related to underage drinking. But with the power of thinking ahead and talking about it with your family, teachers, and friends, you’ll have the tools you need to make smart, healthy choices for your body and future!

Think through these questions and write down your thoughts. They’ll help you meet your goal for staying healthy!

1. Name one of your favorite hobbies or extracurricular activities. How might alcohol affect your performance?

2. What’s a great way to say “no” to underage drinking if your BFF asks you to?

3. Whom would you confide in if you were having trouble making decisions or had questions about underage drinking? What qualities make a good friend or confidant to help you with this decision? Do you have these qualities, too?
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Friendships are an awesome part of being a kid—and being an adult! They can, however, get confusing, especially if underage drinking comes up. Consider the following situation and how you might handle it. What are the risks involved? Why will it pay off to say “no” to underage drinking? And, how should you say “no” with confidence?

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