

A publication from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR) Unit

Sweet Danger—Public Links Alcopops, Underage Drinking

Alcopops, also known as flavored alcoholic beverages, are sweet alcoholic drinks that look and taste like soda pop, tea, punch and lemonade. Labels on alcopops can be confusing, and consumers may not understand that these beverages contain alcohol.

Even though many alcopops contain distilled liquor, most states classify alcopops as “malt beverages,” similar to beer. This designation allows them to be advertised widely, including online, and sold in a greater number of retail locations than drinks with higher alcohol content.

The CS Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked a national sample of adults about their opinions on underage drinking and alcopops.

Concerns with Underage Drinking & Alcopops

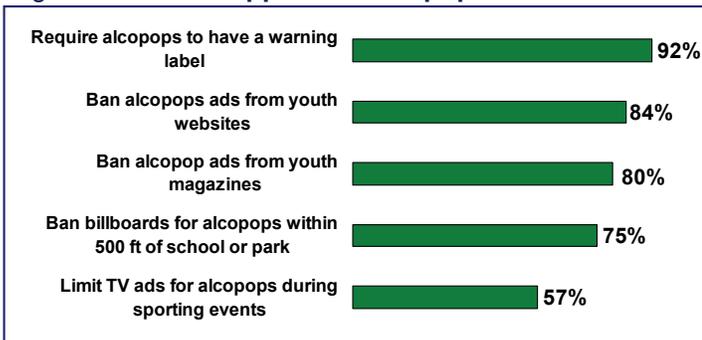
Underage drinking is a concern among the majority of adults. 75% of adults believe that underage drinking is a big problem or somewhat of a problem in their own communities.

Many adults are also concerned that alcopops may encourage underage drinking. 52% of adults believe that alcopops definitely or probably promote underage drinking. 35% of adults believe that alcopops may promote underage drinking and 13% think definitely not.

Support for Stricter Laws Regarding Alcopops

Adults express widespread support for stricter laws regarding alcopops. Requiring alcopops to have an alcohol warning label received the greatest support, with more than 9 out of every 10 adults in favor. Banning alcopop ads from youth websites and magazines also received strong support, followed closely by banning billboards for alcopops within 500 feet of schools, public parks and amusement parks (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Public Support for Alcopop Laws



Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2009

Fewer adults — but still more than one-half — favor banning alcopop ads on television during prime time (59%), prohibiting alcopops from sponsoring college sporting events (58%) and limiting television ads for alcopops during sporting events (57%, Figure 1).

Report Highlights

- **Over one-half of adults believe alcopops promote underage drinking.**
- **Three-quarters of adults say underage drinking is a problem in their communities.**
- **9 in 10 adults support alcohol warning labels for alcopops.**
- **4 in 5 adults support banning alcopop ads from youth websites and magazines.**

Implications

Underage drinking remains a concern for the majority of American adults. Alcopops—with their enticing branding and sweet tastes—are potentially attractive to youth drinkers.

Adults' level of concern about underage drinking explains, to a large extent, their very strong support for many potential new restrictions on alcopops. This poll indicates widespread support for initiatives that are being considered by some state legislatures, including new alcohol warning labels on alcopop containers and bans on alcopop advertising in youth media.

Child health advocates who support legislation regarding alcopops will want to galvanize the current strong public support for their cause. Parents who want more information on underage drinking can get help from health care professionals or through the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, at www.drugfree.org.

Data Source

This report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by Knowledge Networks, Inc, for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital via a method used in many published studies. The survey was administered in January 2009 to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults aged 18 and older (n=2,100) with and without children from the Knowledge Networks standing panel that closely resembles the U.S. population. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 64% among panel members contacted to participate. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2 to 4 percentage points, depending on the question.

C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

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