There is no single age group of people more affected by alcohol and drugs than young people. In some ways it feels like it is an issue everywhere: for you, your family and your friends. Plain and simple, try as you might, you cannot escape the issues of alcohol and drugs.

Nationwide, alcohol and drugs affect each and very one of us, directly or indirectly: in our homes, in our families, in our school, in our dorm, in our community, town or city.

FACT: More than 23 million people over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol and other drugs affecting millions more people…..parents, family members, friends and neighbors.

As a result young people have lots of questions about alcohol and drugs, questions about how to avoid getting in trouble and questions about helping a friend or family members. So, **you have come to the right place** to Learn About Alcohol, Learn About Drugs and if needed, Get Help.

For some, one time or infrequent use of alcohol or drugs can result in tragedy: alcohol overdose (alcohol poisoning), an accident or fall when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or an arrest associated with alcohol or drugs that may cost you your reputation and/or your freedom. For others, even though they may not use alcohol or drugs, they could become a victim of an alcohol or drug-related crime. And, for yet others, what may have started as occasional use can turn into an addiction that presents extraordinary health concerns with potentially grave and tragic consequences.

Before we talk about anything else, there are two important points to be aware of:

Age of First Use of Alcohol and Drugs:

Using alcohol and drugs before the brain has fully developed increases your risk for future addiction to alcohol and drugs dramatically. Young people who start drinking alcohol before age 15 are **5 times more likely** to develop alcohol abuse or dependence than people who first used alcohol at age 21 or older. Research for drug use and drug addiction has found similar results.

Family History of Alcoholism or Drug Addiction:

Whether a person decides to use alcohol or drugs is a choice, influenced by their environment--peers, family, and availability. But, once a person uses alcohol or drugs, the risk of developing alcoholism or drug dependence is largely influenced by genetics. Alcoholism and drug dependence are not moral issues, are not a matter of choice or a lack of willpower. **Plain and simple, people's bodies respond to the effects of alcohol and drugs differently. If you have a family history of alcoholism or addiction, you are four times more likely to develop a problem. To learn more:** Family History and Genetics.

Jessica's Story:

Jessica, a 20 year old college student, admitted to smoking marijuana and drinking with friends before she ran over and killed a jogger, a 46 year-old father of three, happily married with a successful career and good standing in his community as a volunteer at a local food bank.

Jessica was convicted of vehicular manslaughter and negligent homicide. The judge sentenced Jessica to prison for 20 years.

Her parents and many of her classmates wept in the courtroom.

Within this section of the NCADD website, we offer valuable information about:

- Frequently Asked Questions/Facts -- basic Facts as well as responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Underage and Binge Drinking -- an overview of the information about underage drinking, binge drinking and in the college community
- Alcohol, Drugs and Crime -- an overview of the impact of alcohol, drugs and crime, including some information on the number of victims
- Alcohol Energy Drinks -- some information about a particularly dangerous type of alcoholic beverage
- Concerned About Someone? -- if you are concerned about a friend or family member, here is some important information for you
- Tips for Prevention -- information about what you can do help prevent getting in trouble with alcohol and drugs
- Stories of Recovery -- young people sharing their experience in recovery with the hope that it can help other young

NCADD Affiliates offer a range of services including help for individuals and family members. If you are concerned about your own alcohol or other drug use or that of someone you care about—a child or other relative, a friend or co-worker—**please make the contact**. You will be able to speak to someone who will listen, assess your needs and provide information about available services, costs and how to deal with another person's alcohol and/or drug use. **Help is just a call or visit away—Make the contact now!**