



# Did You Know...

Summer is back and so is the heat! Doesn't a nice cold beverage sound good right about now? Maybe some iced tea or lemonade to cool you off? But be careful; make sure the kids don't get confused...

Many beverages these days are cool, refreshing and sweet - and also spiked with alcohol! Malt beverages, also known as "Alcopops" have been around for years, but it seems as though they are becoming more and more popular. There are over 50 Alcopop brands on the shelves today. You might even have some in your refrigerator!

- There are many different brands and flavors of Alcopops. Some popular brands include:
  - Smirnoff Ice, Mike's Hard Lemonade, Bacardi Breezer, Jeremiah Weed, Jack Daniels, *Lynchburg Lemonade* and *Downtown Punch*, Four Loko and Twisted Tea.
- These beverages are usually colorfully packaged and eye catching to children and teenagers.
- Alcopops are commonly fruit-flavored, sugary, sweet, and made to taste like soda or juice rather than alcohol.
- Because these drinks don't look or taste like alcohol, many consumers don't treat them as such. In fact, most Alcopops actually contain more alcohol than beer!
- Teenagers, especially girls LOVE Alcopops:
  - Fifty-one percent of 17 and 18 year olds and 35% of 14-16 year olds have tried Alcopops. This is in comparison to only 24% of adults who have tried them.
  - At least one-third of teen girls has tried Alcopops.

## What You Can Do:

- Educate yourself and your teen on Alcopops. Inform them of what they are and why they are dangerous. Alcopops contain such ingredients as:
  - Taurine – an amino acid, that in large doses causes short term memory loss
  - Ginseng – an Asian aphrodisiac
  - Guarana – form of ephedrine, which is a stimulant and actually banned in some countries
  - Caffeine – also a stimulant and addictive
- Even if you have a young child, educate them about Alcopops and inform them that they are not to drink these beverages. Tell your child that they are for adults only so they don't mistakenly take a sip of yours while at a party or out by the pool this summer.
- If you choose to purchase Alcopops, make sure to keep an inventory of your supplies to prevent youthful curiosity. Or, you may choose to have all alcoholic beverages in a separate locked refrigerator.

Source: Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Inc., [www.eccpasa.org](http://www.eccpasa.org)