

# the RED CUP Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q What percent of kids underage actually drink?

**A.** Welcome to another year of the Red Cup Q&A, where we answer real student questions on all things alcohol. Look for this column Tuesdays in the *Arizona Daily Wildcat*, or check out the Q&A archives online anytime at [www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu).

Now back to your question. Among all underage drinkers in the U.S., typically defined as ages 12-20, 26% used alcohol in the past 30 days.<sup>1</sup> Wondering about the numbers here on campus? Each spring semester at the UA, students take part in the anonymous Health & Wellness Survey across a random selection of classes. According to the 2011 survey, which had 2,479 respondents, 56% of UA students under 21 reported having alcohol at least once in the past 30 days. **In other words, 44% of underage UA students do not drink.**

Seem hard to believe? If it does, you are not alone – many people are surprised given the myths they have heard. After all, drinking stories have a way of getting around more than word of those epic late night study sessions. And let's face it, individuals who drink beyond their limit are sometimes hard to ignore. There's also another reason why these numbers may seem off to you: if you are drinking underage, some of your friends may be drinking with you.

The bottom line is that many UA students don't use alcohol, and for those who do, most of them drink moderately and party smart. For example, 91% of UA students use a designated driver if they plan to drink, 51% set a limit on the number of drinks they will have, and 86% eat food before and while they are drinking. Anytime there is alcohol, there is the potential for risk, but most experienced drinkers realize that part of having a good time is taking steps to be safe.

Stop by the Health Promotion & Preventive Services office at Campus Health for a \*free\* Red Cup pen and snazzy refrigerator magnet with our logo. Got a question for the Cup? Email us at [redcup@email.arizona.edu](mailto:redcup@email.arizona.edu).



<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) data, from <http://www.samhsa.gov/>

wildfact

**68% of UA students usually party less than one night per week.**

(2011 Health & Wellness Survey, N=2,479)



Got a question about alcohol?

Email it to [redcup@email.arizona.edu](mailto:redcup@email.arizona.edu)



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