



**CONNECTICUT  
Clearinghouse**  
a program of the Connecticut Center  
for Prevention, Wellness and Recovery

800.232.4424 (Voice/TTY) 860.793.9813 (Fax)  
www.ctclearinghouse.org



A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

# Alco-Pops

## A Refreshment to Rethink

Alcohol companies have tapped into a growing market to introduce underage drinkers to their products, on the basis that kids who acquire a taste for alcoholic drinks early are more likely to get hooked. While it is still illegal for teens to purchase them, “alcopops,” are flavored beer and vodka drinks that contain caffeine, juices, and other flavors. These drinks often sport names like Moonshot, JungleJoose, and Bacardi Breezer Watermelon, to fool you into believing they are harmless flavored drinks.

### But Drinker Beware...

Alcopops may contain 4-7% alcohol or more, higher than the average can of beer containing a little over 3% alcohol content. Alcohol is a depressant, and so can make you tired and slow your brain and reaction time. That affects your ability to make decisions and to act or think properly—it also makes you thirsty, so you keep drinking. Now throw in a strong jolt of caffeine, such as you find in typical energy drinks. While the alcohol in alcopops tends to make you sleepy, the caffeine in them keeps you feeling “up.” Sugar, the major ingredient in many juice drinks and flavorings, also stimulates your brain to give you a short-term energy surge. Now confused from the caffeine, alcohol, and sugar mix, your brain gets tricked in sometimes lethal ways because these drinks don’t taste like alcohol and make you feel less intoxicated than alcohol alone. This leaves you even less aware of how much you’ve consumed and more likely to binge drink.

### What’s the Big Deal?

The big deal here is that combining a depressant (alcohol) with stimulants (caffeine and sugar) sends mixed signals to your brain, which can have long-term consequences.

So digest the facts before you pop a top: drinking alcohol—including alcopops—can be quite dangerous.



National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)  
NIDA For Teens, 2010

[www.teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/alco-pops-a-refreshment-to-rethink](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/alco-pops-a-refreshment-to-rethink)