

# Mouthwash On The Rocks?

## *It's The Latest Teen Buzz*

(NAPSA)—More than 11 million American youths consumed alcoholic beverages in 2004, which contributed to more than 4,554 deaths. While the battle against underage drinking is nothing new, there is an emerging and alarming threat to contend with—NBEs, or nonbeverage ethanols.

Common NBEs, including some mouthwashes, cough medicines and vanilla extract, can contain between 12 and 30 percent alcohol; more than a can of beer (5 percent) or a glass of wine (12-14 percent).

According to research, one in 10 teenagers, or 2.4 million, have intentionally used cough medicine to get high and more than 135,000 documented nonbeverage ethanol ingestion cases are reported each year.

“The problem is that these products, unlike beer or hard alcohol, can be easily obtained by children from a local grocery or drugstore,” said Raquel Lothridge, employee at the California Department of Education. “In a recent trip to my local store, I found more than 50 everyday products that contained high levels of ethanol alcohol. And because these products are so easy to obtain, children are literally buying bottles of mouthwash or other products and taking them to parties to get high.”

Lothridge is also a board member of the Awareness of Alcohol Content In Everyday Products (AACEP) organization. Its mission is to serve as advocates for change and help increase parents' awareness of the harmful effects of NBEs in common over-the-counter products.

Besides causing the impairment normally associated with abusing alcohol, when improper amounts are ingested, these products have been known to cause hypoglycemia and could possibly induce a seizure or coma. If more than 5 percent of

Liquid Product/ Beverage	% Ethanol Alcohol
Nonbeverage ethanol product (i.e., mouthwash, vanilla extract & cough medicine)	12-30
Glass of wine	12-14
Can of beer	5-7

*EMedHome.com. "Overlooked Sources of Ethanol  
(Nonbeverage Ethanol)" 2006.*



ethanol alcohol enters the bloodstream, it can even cause death.

AACEP offers some helpful tips on how to keep an NBE-free home and help keep your children safe.

**1. Clean House**—Look through cupboards, medicine cabinets and children's bedrooms. Check out ingredients in suspect products.

**2. Buy Smart**—Read labels prior to purchasing items for the household. In many cases, there are alcohol-free alternatives to products such as mouthwash, cough and cold remedies, vanilla extract, aftershave lotions, hair spray and rubbing alcohol.

**3. Lock the Medicine Cabinet**—Much like the liquor cabinet, lock medicine away (liquid and/or pills) in a safe place and advise children to respect over-the-counter products.

**4. Keep Kids Active**—The best defense is a good offense. Involve them in sports, summer camps and/or any activities monitored by an adult.

**5. Search for the Signs**—Nonbeverage ethanols are known to cause behavioral changes, impaired judgment and slurred speech, even when taken in lower concentrations.

For additional information about AACEP and the harmful effects of NBEs found in common, over-the-counter products, visit [www.aacep.org](http://www.aacep.org).