



ALCOPOPS: THE HIDDEN TRUTH



Get the Facts



FACT #1 — Alcopops are escaping normal tax rates.

- ◆ Even though alcopops contain the same amount of alcohol as beer, they contain a different type of alcohol. Beer is derived from a fermented brew while alcopops contain distilled spirits.¹
- ◆ Alcohol derived from distilled spirits is more pure than fermented alcohol. It tastes smoother and doesn't have the bitter beer taste, making it more appealing and easier for youth to consume.²
- ◆ The Trade and Tax Bureau (TTB) did an ingredient analysis of alcopops. Of the 114 tested, 105 contained over 76% distilled alcohol.³
- ◆ Currently, alcopops are classified as beer even though they contain distilled spirits. Being misclassified allows the alcohol companies to avoid higher taxes and have wider availability to sell their products.⁴
- ◆ Utah state law mandates that distilled spirits be sold in state liquor stores.⁵



FACT #2 — Alcopops are advertised and targeted to youth.

- ◆ Alcopops have bright, flashy packaging that appeals to youth.⁶
- ◆ The TTB has stated that alcopops “exhibit little or no traditional beer or malt beverage character. Brewers...remove the color, bitterness and taste that are generally associated with beer.”²
- ◆ The packaging, taste, and marketing closely resemble distilled spirits' products, not beer products. Alcopops are beverages for “new drinkers” who have not acquired the taste for alcohol and a stepping stone from soda pop to distilled spirits.⁷
- ◆ When asked what one type of alcoholic drink they would most prefer to drink, nearly 30% of teens said alcopops compared to only 16% for beer and 16% for mixed drinks.⁸
- ◆ By treating alcopops as beer, distillers are able to market their brand names on network television, which is off limits to distilled spirits products.³



FACT #3 — Alcohol companies deceive us.

- ◆ “The beauty of this category [alcopops] is that it brings in new drinkers, people who really don't like the taste of beer.”⁹
- ◆ “Our goal is to win the entry-level beer drinker.”⁹
- ◆ Research shows that nearly 90% of the population begins drinking before 21, and the average age of initiation is 16 years old.¹⁰
- ◆ The alcohol companies have a misguided effort to protect its economic stake in the alcopops market at the expense of the health and safety of youth of our communities.¹¹

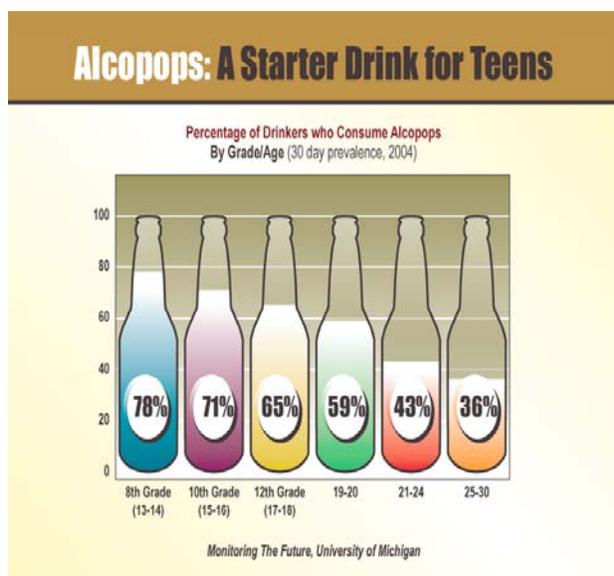
What are alcopops?

- ◆ Sweet, fruit-flavored drinks that look and taste like soda pop, lemonade, punch and tea⁶
- ◆ Alcopops are not beer. They are an alcohol product that contains distilled spirits.
- ◆ Also known as “flavored malt beverages (FMBs),” “malternatives,” and “flavored alcoholic beverages”
- ◆ Bridge between non-alcoholic beverages and the harsher tastes of traditional alcohol products.³



Sources for Alcopops Fact Sheet

1. The manufacturing process is described in: Federal Register/Vol. 68, No. 56/Monday, March 24, 2003/ Proposed Rules. <http://www.ttb.gov/alcohol/rules/index.htm>
2. Alcohol and Tobacco Trade and Tax Bureau. *Flavored Malt Beverage and Related Regulatory Amendments*. Federal Register. January 3, 2005; 68:194-237
3. Mosher, J. and D. Johnson, "Flavored Alcoholic Beverages: An International Marketing Campaign that Targets Youth." *Journal of Public Health Policy* 26(3): 326-342 (2005).
4. Mosher, J. and A. Hauck, "Alcopops and Illinois Law: How Should They Be Classified?"
5. Utah Code Annotated: 32a-1
6. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. "Teen Tipplers: America's Underage Drinking Epidemic." Revised February 2003. 28.
7. Leonhardt, D., A Little Booze For the Kiddies? "Alcopops" pitched to younger drinkers are stirring controversy. *Business Week*, September 23, 1996, p. 158; Sherer, M. Mad for Malternatives: Sales of Alternative Malt Beverages are Exploding. Will the Trend Last? *Beverage Dynamics*, May-June 2002, pp. 6-10.
8. Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). "Alcopops: Summary of Findings. What Teens and Adults are Saying about Alcopops." Poll released May 2001. www.cspinet.org/booze/alcopops_summary.htm
9. Marlene Coulis, Director of new products, Anheuser-Busch, quoted in *Advertising Age*, April 22, 2002.
10. MICHAEL PERGAMIT, LYNN HUANG, & JULIE LANE, THE LONG TERM IMPACT OF ACOLESCENT RISKY BEHAVIORS AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT, (National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago ed., 2001) (report submitted to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services) available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/riskybehav01/chapt4.htm>
11. Latimer, J. Memorandum: Background information on Flavored Malt Beverages. Sacto, CA: Capitol Advocacy (no date).



Comparing Smirnoff Ice and Smirnoff Vodka Advertising



See www.marininstitute.org