

Finnish teens drinking and smoking less: study

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Finnish teens are drinking and smoking less, a study published on Wednesday showed, attributing the decline to advertising restrictions, increased controls and higher sales taxes on the products.

The trend was welcomed in Finland, where "binge-drinking and [alcohol consumption](#) remains relatively high" compared to the rest of Europe, the authors of the study, from the University of Tampere, said.

The report is conducted every two years and submitted to the government.

The number of [teens](#) between the ages of 14 and 18 who said they smoked daily fell from 26 percent in 2001 to 12 percent.

And 12 percent said they drank [alcohol](#) to get "very drunk" at least once a month, compared to 22 percent in 1997.

The share of teens who said they never drank alcohol rose to 39 percent, the highest level recorded since 1983.

The authors of the study said the decline was the result of stricter regulations on advertising for alcohol and tobacco, increased controls, and higher taxes.

In Finland, where consumers must be 18 years old to buy alcohol and [cigarettes](#), shopkeepers are now required to ask for identity papers for

anyone who looks to be under the age of 30.

And since 2012, shopkeepers are not allowed to display cigarettes openly, keeping them out of view instead.

Advertising of weaker alcoholic beverages, such as beer, has also become more strictly regulated. The government plans to extend a ban on advertising to include public spaces such as bus stops and social media networks on the Internet.

"Advertising alcohol gets people to start drinking at a younger age," the study said.

The authors hailed the government for systematically raising taxes on alcohol and [tobacco](#), with three hikes since 2009.

"This development should be supported by every means," the study said.

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