

Surviving the Teenage Years

PTA Council of Howard County and HC DrugFree Information & Tips for Parents of Teens

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Parent's Tips for Teen Parties & Sleepovers

When Your Teen is Giving A Party or Sleepover

- Plan in advance.
Talk over party plans with your teenager and know the guest list. This way you can curb the “open party” situation. No guest list, no party.
- Agree to rules ahead of time. These might include:
No tobacco, alcohol or other drugs PERIOD
No leaving the party and then returning
No gate crashers allowed.
Lights are to be left on.
Some rooms in your house are off limits.
- Make it clear that anyone violating the rules will have to leave.
- Set a time limit.
Set a start and ending time – not too long. Consider daytime parties as an option.
- Invite another parent, relative or couple over. Other adults are company for you and can help with any problems.
- Know your responsibilities.
IT IS ILLEGAL to serve alcohol to minors. You may be held responsible for teens who drink at your home, or accidents that occur afterwards as a result of underage drinking at your home.

When Your Teen is Going to a Party or Sleepover

- Call the host. Check for parental supervision and that no alcohol will be allowed.
- Be aware. Know where your teen is going and with whom. If you don't know the host parents, introduce yourself and get their address.
- Make it easy for your teenager to leave that party.
Tell your teenager if there is drinking and he or she needs to leave the party to call you for a ride home. Urge your teen to NEVER ride with anyone who has been drinking. Have an understanding that there will be no punishment for a call letting you know things are getting out of hand. Always praise your teen for asking for help out of a dangerous situation.
- Be up and greet your teenager when he or she comes home.

Source: Howard County Health Department, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Prevention Division

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WHY 21?

- More than 25,000 lives have been saved in the U.S. thanks to the 21 Minimum Legal Drinking Age¹
- This law continues to prevent tragedies—decreasing crashes by an estimated 16 percent⁹ and keeping young people safer from many risks. Sometimes, without knowing all the facts, people assert that youth shouldn't have to wait until they're 21 to drink. James C. Fell, a public health researcher at the Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation, responds to their questions:

Why do we make young people wait until 21 to drink alcohol?

- Many activities have ages of initiation. A person must wait until age 16 to start driving, age 18 to marry without parental consent, age 35 to become president, and so on.
- The age limit for alcohol is based on research which shows that young people react differently to alcohol. Teens get drunk twice as fast as adults,⁹ but have more trouble knowing when to stop. Teens naturally overdo it and binge more often than adults.
- Enforcing the legal drinking age of 21 reduces traffic crashes,⁴⁻⁶ protects young people's maturing brains,^{12,14} and keeps young people safer overall.

Can't parents teach their teens how to drink alcohol responsibly by giving them small amounts—under supervision—before they reach 21?

- Some states, including Maryland, permit parents to do this with their own child (rarely, if ever, with someone else's child), but there's no evidence that this approach actually works.³ As matter of fact, there is evidence to contrary. When teens feel they have their parents' approval to drink, they do it more and more often when they are not with their parents. When parents have concrete, enforced rules about alcohol, young people binge drink less.

Would lowering the legal drinking age make alcohol less of a big deal, and less attractive to teens?

- History says no. When states had lower legal drinking ages in the U.S., the underage drinking problem was worse.³ For example, before the 21 minimum legal drinking age was implemented by all states, underage drunk drivers were involved in over twice as many fatal traffic crashes as today.³

I thought Europeans have fewer underage drinking problems ... is it because their kids drink from an earlier age?

- That's a myth. European countries have worse problems than America does, as far as binge drinking and drinking to intoxication.² Studies show that Europe has more underage drunkenness, injury, rape, and school problems due to alcohol.^{1,3} Since alcohol is more available there, it actually increases the proportion of kids who drink in Europe.

Some people propose a 40-hour alcohol education course for teens that would entitle teens to drink before 21. Is this a good idea?

- Research shows that education alone doesn't prevent risky behaviors. For example, driver education by itself does not reduce youth car crashes. Beginning drivers need other restrictions in place, such as curfews and passenger limits, to stay safe. In addition, there are clear health risks associated with underage drinking.^{7,14}

Source: <http://www.madd.org/underage-drinking/why21>

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You're not only a parent. You're a safety feature.

Nothing kills more teenagers than car crashes. Research shows which behaviors contribute to teen-related crashes. Inexperience and immaturity combined with speed, drinking and driving, not wearing seat belts, distracted driving (cell phone use, loud music, other teen passengers, etc.), drowsy driving, nighttime driving, and other drug use aggravate this problem. Luckily many get help from an important safety feature – parents!! **Your influence matters.**

What You Can Do As A Parent of a Teen

1. Set a Good Example

Your teen will copy your driving habits. If you don't obey traffic laws, buckle up, keep your cool in traffic, drive speed limits, or stay off the cell phone behind the wheel, they won't either.

2. Be a Teacher

Teach your teen about driving and the technology behind it. Point out what to look for – traffic signs, bad drivers, emergencies, and more, as you drive with them.

3. Supervise Practice Driving

Give your teen as much supervised practice as possible on different roads, in different weather, and in all kinds of driving conditions – even after your teen receives a license.

4. Monitor and Restrict

Parents who control driving privileges – when, how often, and under what conditions – have safer teen drivers. Studies show that teens are less likely to take risks if schoolwork and grades are monitored, ground rules are established, and parental relationships with friends are good. On the other hand, teens with lenient parental driving restrictions are more likely to have more traffic violations and crashes.

5. Use a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement

A formal agreement between you and your teen should cover all driving rules and agreements, plus the consequences for breaking those rules. (Crossroads – The Maryland Parent-Teen Driving Agreement is available on the Maryland MVA website.)

6. Reduce Risks

Understand the possible risks that may tempt your young driver. Driving with other teen passengers, driving at night, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, and being inattentive are all dangerous actions that should be avoided.

7. Think Safety First

Consider purchasing a new or used vehicle with good safety features – side impact as well as dashboard and steering wheel air bags, automatic door locks, and anti-lock braking system, traction control devices, and other technological improvements.

8. Don't Rush It

Parents often rush the licensing process for their teens to free up their own time – and to encourage their teens to run errands for them. Remember – inexperience is the number one contributing factor to unsafe and potentially hazardous driving situations.

The best person to teach your teen how to become a safe, responsible driver is you. Your wisdom, your guidance, and your continued involvement will not only make a big difference, it could save lives.

Get Involved. Stay Involved.

Source: Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration - <http://mva.state.md.us>

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Teens don't always make the best choices...

make a safety plan with your teen.

No matter what we do to protect our teens from drugs and alcohol, all teens get into tough spots once in a while. That's when a good safety plan comes into play.

Imagine you're a teen and you've just done something really dumb like get drunk at a friend's house. Who are the last people on earth you'd want to find out? Your parents, right? You'd be in so much trouble if they did.

A safety plan gets your teen past that fear by letting him know that you care more about him than about what he does. Even if you think he already knows how you feel, spell it out for him. Then lay out your plan. Here's one way to do it:

"Nothing in the world is more important to me than keeping you healthy and safe. That's one reason I don't want you to drink or do drugs. But if you ever find yourself in a bad situation — like, you get drunk at a party, or the person who's supposed to drive you home does — I want you to call me. I don't care what time it is. I'll come to pick you up and I won't ask any questions until the next day. Will you promise to do that for me?"

Source: The Partnership for a Drug Free America: A Parent's Guide to the Teen Brain
<http://www.drugfree.org/teenbrain/tools>

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Communication with Teens: Things to Remember

- **Remember that during adolescence, communication generally decreases and a child will confide less in parents.** This is a fairly normal process and should not be overreacted to.
- **Listen to what is being said;** that is, try to understand the teenager's feelings and where she is coming from. Rather than thinking about arguments or retaliations, listen to her.
- **Stop what you are doing and look at the teenager.** Listen when she speaks to you. Be sure that you are giving her the proper attention and that she is not talking to a newspaper or to your back.
- **Be sure most of your communication is positive, not negative.** Don't dwell on mistakes, failures, misbehaviors, or something they forgot to do. Give them positive communication and talk about their successes, accomplishments, interests, and appropriate behavior.
- **Talk to them about their interests** (e.g., music, sports, computers, dance-team practice, cars, and motorcycles). Have conversations with them when you are not trying to make a point, to teach them something, or to impress them. Talk to them just to talk and to have positive verbal interaction.
- **Avoid talking too much** - giving long or too-detailed explanations, repeating lectures, questioning excessively, or using other forms of communication that will result in the teenager turning a deaf ear to you.
- **Try to understand the teen's feelings.** You do not have to agree or disagree with him; just make him aware that you understand how he feels. Do not try to explain away his emotions. There are times when you do not have to fix things or make the youngster feel better. Understanding how he feels may be the primary comfort that is needed.
- **Do not overreact to what is said.** Remember, sometimes teenagers say things that are designed to get a reaction from their parents. In addition, do not say "no" too fast. Sometimes it is better to think about the request and give a response later. In other words, think before you open your mouth.
- **Try to create situations in which communication can occur** (driving the child to the doctor's appointment, having the teenager help you with household tasks). You have to be physically close to the teenager for communication to occur. A television in the adolescent's room can be an additional barrier to family communication. Whenever possible, the parent should try to do things *with* the teenager, rather than separately. Although the child may not frequently accept them, provide opportunities for him to do things with you.
- **Try to avoid power struggles, confrontation, and arguing matches.** Your goal should be to have the communication move toward a compromise situation, rather than a battle. When appropriate, involve the teenager in decision making and setting consequences for his or her behavior.

Your wisdom, your guidance, and your continued involvement with your teen will make a big difference in their life. Get Involved. Stay Involved.

Source: Family Education <http://www.familyeducation.com/home/>

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What Parents Can Do

Here's how you can help your teens handle the many pressures he/she faces today:

- **Appreciate how different their world is from when you were a teen.**
- **Be involved. Encourage other adults (teachers, older siblings, etc.) to be active in your teen's life as well.**
- **Challenge your teen to be an individual or a leader, not a follower, and encourage independence and integrity.**
- **Focus on the positive instead of criticizing, praise your teen's special talents and nurture his/her interests.**
- **Entertainment and advertising have a bigger influence on teens when it comes to substance use, sexual behavior, body image and gender roles than they might acknowledge. Set and enforce limits on your teens media use.**
- **Avoid commenting on your teen's appearance – instead focus on health.**
- **Use everyday opportunities such as watching TV together, to start a dialogue about topics like drugs and sex.**
- **Watch TV and movies with your teen so you can better connect and discuss the messages they send about body image and other expectations**
- **Model and teach positive stress management and coping skills.**
- **Listen carefully and watch to make sure your teen isn't overloaded.**
- **Provide your teen with opportunities for debate and independent decision-making**
- **If you suspect your teen may be taking part in bullying, find out the reason for the behavior. Make it clear that your teen is not permitted to engage in bullying and if needed, check in with teachers and other school officials.**

Source: www.theantidrug.com/advice/teens-today/navigating-th-teen-years/pressures-on-teens.aspx

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Dangers of Teen Drinking

Teens don't just drink. They drink to excess.

More than 8 percent of eighth graders, 16 percent of sophomores, and 24 percent of seniors report recent binge drinking (5+ drinks on the same occasion). Statistics show that the majority of current teen drinkers got drunk in the previous month. That includes 50 percent of the high school sophomores who drink and 65 percent of the high school seniors who drink.

Underage drinking is linked to injury and risky behavior.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, about 5,000 kids under 21 die every year as a result of underage drinking – from crashes, homicides, and suicides. Teens that drink also are at risk for a long list of other injuries and potential life-long alcohol abuse. Reducing underage drinking can reduce drinking-related harm.

Brain Development and Alcohol Abuse

Research indicates that the human brain continues to develop into a person's early 20's, and that exposure of the developing brain to alcohol may have long-lasting effects on intellectual capabilities and may increase the likelihood of alcohol addiction. The age when drinking starts affects future drinking problems. For each year that the start of drinking is delayed, the risk of later alcohol dependence is reduced by 14 percent.

Drinking and Driving

Car crashes are the leading cause of death among people ages 15 to 20. About 1,900 people under 21 die every year from car crashes involving underage drinking. Young people are more susceptible to alcohol-induced impairment of their driving skills. Drinking drivers aged 16 to 20 are twice as likely to be involved in a fatal crash as drinking drivers who are 21 or older.

Suicide

Alcohol use interacts with conditions like depression and stress, and contributes to an estimated 300 teen suicides a year. High school students who drink are twice as likely to have seriously considered attempting suicide, as compared to nondrinkers. High school students who binge drink are four times as likely to have attempted suicide, as compared to nondrinkers.

Sexual Behavior

Current teen drinkers are more than twice as likely to have had sexual intercourse within the past three months as teens who don't drink. Higher drinking levels increase the likelihood of sexual activity. Adolescents who drink are more likely to engage in risky sexual activities, like having sex with someone they don't know or failing to use birth control.

Other Risks

Teens that drink alcohol are more likely than nondrinkers to smoke marijuana, use inhalants, or carry a weapon. Binge drinking substantially increases the likelihood of these activities.

Academic Performance

A government study published in 2007 shows a relationship between binge drinking and grades. Approximately two-thirds of students with "mostly A's" are non-drinkers, while nearly half of the students with "mostly D's and F's" report binge drinking. It is not clear, however, whether academic failure leads to drinking, or vice versa.

Source: www.DontServeTeens.gov/dangers.html.

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Teen drinking is *not* inevitable. More than 56 percent of high school seniors don't drink alcohol, reducing their current risk of injury. All adults can play a role in reducing teen access to alcohol and related harm.

Teens report that alcohol is easy to get. Social sources, like family and friends, are the primary sources of alcohol for kids who drink. In a 2008 government survey of underage drinkers 12 to 20, 69 percent said they got alcohol without having to pay for it. Some were given alcohol by parents, other family, or friends; others took alcohol without permission.

Parents strongly support 21 as the legal drinking age. In one recent national survey, 79 percent of parents said the drinking age should stay the same or be raised.

Take steps at home. Keep track of the alcohol in your home. Make sure teens can't access it without your knowledge. Let your teen know that the minimum legal drinking age is 21, and that drinking can cause serious [health and safety consequences](#) to teens and [legal consequences](#) for a person who provides the alcohol.

Talk to your kids about how to say no to a drink. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism suggests these responses:

No thanks.

I don't feel like it. Do you have any soda?

Alcohol's not my thing.

Are you talking to me? Forget it.

You're pressuring me. I said no.

Back off.

Take steps in your community. It may have already happened. A neighbor announces she is hosting a teen party, but you shouldn't worry — she's taking the car keys from every kid who comes in. A friend wonders if the legal drinking age causes more problems than it solves. A colleague says he's serving alcohol to his high school son's friends so he can control how much they consume. Stand up, and spread the word that you don't want other people serving alcohol to your teen or condoning teen drinking. Silence can be misinterpreted. Let your friends, neighbors, and family members know that the minimum drinking age is a policy that protects teens, and that you do not want your teen to drink.

Talk to the parents of your teen's friends. Let them know that teen drinking poses unacceptable risks and that you do not want — or expect — anyone to allow your teen to drink alcohol.

Talk to adults who host teen parties. Let them know that 86 percent of parents support the legal drinking age and a whopping 96 percent of adults agree that it is not okay to serve alcohol to someone else's teen — and not okay to turn a blind eye to teens' alcohol consumption.

Talk to your school board, school principals, teachers, and coaches. Let them know that it is unsafe, illegal, and irresponsible to condone teen drinking. Ask them to discourage this activity.

Talk to management at restaurants, town halls, and other venues where teen parties are held. Let them know that parents in your community do not want teens to have access to alcohol.

Let local law enforcement know that you don't oppose active policing of noisy teen parties. A noisy party may signal alcohol use; you will ask them to check it out.

Tell local alcohol retailers that you don't mind waiting while they check ID before selling alcohol. Limiting alcohol sales to legal purchasers is an important goal and worth the time it takes.

Don't serve alcohol to teens.

It's unsafe. It's illegal. It's irresponsible

Source: www.DontServeTeens.gov/dangers.html.

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Underage Drinking As a National Priority

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States, more than tobacco and illicit drugs. Although drinking by persons under the age of 21 is illegal, people aged 12 to 20 years drink 11% of all alcohol consumed in the United States.¹ Early-onset underage drinking has been linked to alcohol-related problems not only during adolescence but also in adulthood. Some facts presented by Dr Ralph Hingson, ScD, MPH, Division of Epidemiology and Prevention Research, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, in a 2009 commentary titled “The Legal Drinking Age and Underage Drinking in the United States” are listed below.²

- **On the average day in the United States, nearly 8000 children ages 12 to 17 begin to drink.**
- **High school students who use alcohol or other drugs frequently are up to 5 times more likely than other students to drop out of school.**
- **Underage alcohol use is more likely to kill young people than all illegal drugs combined.**
- **More than 1,700 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 in the U.S. are killed each year—about 4.65 a day—as a result of alcohol-related injuries. Nearly 599,000 students in this age group each year are unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol.**
- **Underage drinkers tend to drink heavily, on average 5 drinks per occasion 6 times per month.**
- **Frequent binge-drinking high school students (almost 1 million in the United States) are more likely to engage in a variety of high-risk behaviors when intoxicated. They are more likely to drive after drinking, ride with drinking drivers, never wear seat belts, carry weapons, and, in the past year, be injured in physical fights and suicide attempts. They also are more likely to engage in unplanned and unprotected sex, use illicit drugs, drink and use illicit drugs on school property, and have poor academic performance.**
- **Human brain development continues into the third decade of life, raising concerns that heavy alcohol use during adolescence may produce disproportionately greater cognitive deficits among adolescents relative to adults.**

These data reflect a pervasive issue that culminates in immense social, financial, and human costs. Because its impact is broad and far-reaching, policymakers, public health officials, parents, and community members have responded. Some initiatives to address the issue in recent years have been:

- **In 2006, the US Congress passed the Sober Truth on Preventing (STOP) Underage Drinking Act to help states and communities address this chronic problem.**

- **In 2007, The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking appealed to Americans to do more to stop current underage drinkers from using alcohol and to keep other adolescents from starting.**
- **In 2007-2008, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provided funding for communities to conduct Town Hall Meetings on underage drinking.**

1Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Drinking in America: Myths, Realities, and Prevention Policy. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; 2005. Available at http://www.udetc.org/documents/Drinking_in_America.pdf* (PDF). Accessed March 28, 2008.]

2Dr Ralph Hingson, ScD, MPH, Division of Epidemiology and Prevention Research, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, in a 2009 commentary titled "The Legal Drinking Age and Underage Drinking in the United States", Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med. 2009;163(7):598-600.

Source: <http://www.alcoholfreechildren.org/node/254>

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Staying in Touch with your Teen

Know where your teen is when he or she is away from home. Have your kids check in with you regularly. Give them coins, a phone card or mobile phone with clear usage rules. (For example, "When I leave you a voicemail, I expect a call back within five minutes.") If a beeper or cell phone is not allowed to be used in school, have your child keep one in his backpack and ask him to turn it on after school. You may have to coordinate the use of beepers and cell phones with school administrators. If your teen does not have a cell phone, get numbers of where he'll be after school so that you can check in or have him call you at certain times so he can check in with you.

- **Make a list of her activities** for the coming day and put it on the fridge, on a calendar or in your wallet or pocketbook.
- **Walk through your neighborhood** and note where kids your child's age hang out.
- **Know your teen's friends.** Have a small party at your house and invite the parents of his friends. Have his friends stay for dinner. Ask them about their parents. Make a point of meeting your teen's friends' parents — find them at a school event or PTA meeting, soccer practice, dance rehearsal or wherever the kids hang out.
- **Work with other parents** to get a list of everyone's addresses, e-mails, and phone numbers so you can keep in touch with your teen.
- **Show up a little early** to pick up your teen so you can observe her behavior.
- **Occasionally check to see that your teen is where he says he's going to be.**
- **Lots of teenagers get in trouble with drugs right after school — from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.** Try to be with your kids then, but if you can't, make sure your child is doing something positive with an adult around: Sports, jobs, clubs, after-school programs or religious youth groups. If your kids have to be home, make sure they are doing homework or chores and not hanging out with friends.

Source: The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign's Behavior Change Expert Panel

From www.theantidrug.com/advice/safeguarding-and-monitoring/monitoring-skills/staying-in-touch.aspx

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Maryland Alcohol Laws

Legal Consequences for Teens and Parents

Underage Laws

- If you are under 21, it is illegal to drive or attempt to drive a motor vehicle with 0.02 percent or more blood alcohol level (that's less than one drink!). If you do...**you may be fined \$500 and your license may be suspended for one year. It is a 12 point violation for violating a license restriction, added on to an 8 to 12 point DUI/DWI violation.**
- If you are under 21 and are found to be in possession of alcohol, are in a car with alcohol or are where alcohol is served...**you may receive a civil citation, your parents will be notified (if you are under age 18) or you will have to go to court (age 18-20), and you may be fined up to \$500 for a first offense and \$1,000 for a second offense. You may also be required to do community service.**
- If you present a false I.D. or an I.D. that is not your own to purchase alcoholic beverages or to gain entry to an establishment where alcohol is sold, **you may receive a civil citation and face a \$500 or \$1,000 fine. You may also receive a traffic summons for possession of or displaying a false or altered driver's license, and have to obtain legal representation and appear in court. If you are found guilty, you can be jailed for up to 6 months and/or fined up to \$500. You can also receive 12 points on your driver's license...(and 12 points = YOU LOSE YOUR LICENSE)**
- If you possess alcohol on school grounds, **your driving privilege may be suspended for thirty to ninety days.**

Adult Laws

- It is illegal for adults to allow underage drinking on property which they own or lease.
- If an adult is found guilty of obtaining alcohol for a minor or furnishing alcohol to a minor it is a misdemeanor criminal charge. **The adult is subject to a fine of up to \$2500 for a first offense and \$5,000 for a subsequent offense.**
- **If an adult is convicted of contributing to the delinquency of a minor (a criminal charge), the adult could be fined up to \$2,500 and sentenced to up to three years in jail.** The minor need not be convicted or found delinquent for the adult to be held responsible.
- **Selling, issuing, or offering for sale blank or incorrect age identification cards can result in a \$2,000 fine and up to two years in jail for each card sold.**
- Possessing a beer keg without a registration affixed or removing the registration form can result in a \$500 fine for a first offense.
- **Remember, if you are an adult, you are responsible for making a safe environment for the young people in your charge.**

You're the parent. Be responsible. Keep your child and their friends safe.

Source: Howard County Department of Police: <http://howardcountymd.gov/police>

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Teen Culture: Talking to Your Teens about Prescription Drugs

Teenagers turn to prescription drugs because they perceive them as less dangerous than illegal drugs. Because of this, teenage prescription drug abuse is on the rise. But the good news is, as a parent, you can influence your teen's decision not to use drugs. The majority of teens still report that their parents—not their peers or the media—have the biggest influence on their decision to stay drug-free. Use this influence to talk to your teen about the danger of misusing prescription drugs.

Some Ideas on Starting The Conversation with your Teens

- In conversations with your teen about drugs, be sure to include prescription drug abuse and why it's harmful. Tell them that taking prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs without a doctor's approval and supervision can be a dangerous—even deadly—decision. Dispel the myth that these drugs are less harmful than street drugs because they are available through a doctor or at the local drug store.
- If you hear about another teenager getting caught abusing prescription drugs, calmly approach your teen about it. It's important to not react in any way that cuts off further discussion.
- Be flexible about when you talk, but not about whether you talk.
- Remember: silence isn't golden. It's permission.
- For more information on teenage drug abuse and for additional ideas on talking with kids about drugs and alcohol, visit timetotalk.org, a website of the Partnership for a Drug Free America. Remember, as a parent, the things you say and do have a large influence on the decisions your child makes—especially when it comes to drugs or alcohol.

Source: The Partnership for DrugFree America
http://notinmyhouse.drugfree.org/culture_talk2teen.aspx

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Surviving the Teenage Years

PTA Council and HC DrugFree Information & Tips for Parents of Teens

KEEPING IT SAFE

Keeping Students Safe During Prom & Graduation Season

Do you know if your student is with a limousine company that uses these guidelines?

Individual limousine companies have policies that may differ from this page.

Parents are urged to check with the Maryland Limousine Association or the Public Service Commission with any questions or concerns.

Zero Tolerance

These companies take a zero tolerance approach to alcohol, tobacco, and drug use. Any offender will be removed from the limousine, the contact parent will be called, the offender's parent(s) will be called and the evening will end.

Safety

Limousine service is a safe way for students to travel to proms and graduation activities. Students are afforded a sense of independence and glamour while still being "supervised" by an adult.

Contact Parent

Throughout the evening limousine drivers call the contact parent to keep them apprised of the evening's progress.

Peace of Mind

- ~ The limousine service provides parents/guardians with the peace of mind of knowing their student(s) is with an adult who is looking out for their well being.
- ~ Students are only transported to destinations that are pre-specified by the adult that makes a contract with one of the partnership companies
- ~ Contracts are not made with anyone less than 18 years of age.
- ~ No back packs are allowed in the limousine. All back packs are kept in the trunk until the last drop off.
- ~ Change of clothes bags are also kept in the trunk.
- ~ All policies are reviewed with the student before they enter the limousine.
- ~ One pick-up location per contract to eliminate opportunities to "smuggle" zero tolerance items into the limousine.
- ~ No additional passengers allowed in the limousine. If a student is not in the original party, they are not allowed in the limousine
- ~ Beverages will not be allowed in the limousine
- ~ No hotel drop offs
- ~ There may be additional cleaning fees or vehicle damage fees
- ~ Check with company for policies regarding lost or theft of personal belongings
- ~ Check with company for policies regarding payment expectations, refunds, etc.

Source: The Montgomery County Project Prom/Graduation website. <http://www.mcppg.org/>

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Parent's Tips for Stopping Teens' Access to Alcohol

Teen drinking is *not* inevitable.

More than 56 percent of high school seniors don't drink alcohol, reducing their current risk of injury. All adults can play a role in reducing teen access to alcohol and related harm.

Teens report that alcohol is easy to get. Social sources, like family and friends, are the primary sources of alcohol for kids who drink.

- In a 2008 government survey of underage drinkers 12 to 20, 69 percent said they got alcohol without having to pay for it. Some were given alcohol by parents, other family, or friends; others took alcohol without permission.

Parents strongly support 21 as the legal drinking age.

- In one recent national survey, 79 percent of parents said the drinking age should stay the same or be raised.
- In another recent national survey, 84 percent gave this answer.

Take steps at home.

- Keep track of the alcohol in your home. Make sure teens can't access it without your knowledge.
- Let your teen know that the minimum legal drinking age is 21, and that drinking can cause serious [health and safety consequences](#) to teens and [legal consequences](#) for a person who provides the alcohol.
- Talk to your kids about how to say no to a drink. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism suggests these responses:
 - *No thanks.*
 - *I don't feel like it. Do you have any soda?*
 - *Alcohol's not my thing.*
 - *Are you talking to me? Forget it.*
 - *You're pressuring me. I said no.*
 - *Back off.*

Don't serve alcohol to teens.
It's unsafe. It's illegal. It's irresponsible

Source:www.DontServeTeens.gov/stopping success.html

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Parent's Tips for Taking Steps in Your Community

Take steps in your community.

It may have already happened. A neighbor announces she is hosting a teen party, but you shouldn't worry — she's taking the car keys from every kid who comes in. A friend wonders if the legal drinking age causes more problems than it solves. A colleague says he's serving alcohol to his high school son's friends so he can control how much they consume.

- Stand up, and spread the word that you don't want other people serving alcohol to your teen or condoning teen drinking. Silence can be misinterpreted. Let your friends, neighbors, and family members know that the minimum drinking age is a policy that protects teens, and that you do not want your teen to drink.
- Talk to the parents of your teen's friends. Let them know that teen drinking poses unacceptable risks and that you do not want — or expect — anyone to allow your teen to drink alcohol.
- Talk to adults who host teen parties. Let them know that 86 percent of parents support the legal drinking age and a whopping 96 percent of adults agree that it is not okay to serve alcohol to someone else's teen — and not okay to turn a blind eye to teens' alcohol consumption.
- Talk to your school board, school principals, teachers, and coaches. Let them know that it is unsafe, illegal, and irresponsible to condone teen drinking. Ask them to discourage this activity.
- Talk to management at restaurants, town halls, and other venues where teen parties are held. Let them know that parents in your community do not want teens to have access to alcohol.
- Let local law enforcement know that you don't oppose active policing of noisy teen parties. A noisy party may signal alcohol use; you will ask them to check it out.
- Tell local alcohol retailers that you don't mind waiting while they check ID before selling alcohol. Limiting alcohol sales to legal purchasers is an important goal and worth the time it takes.

Check out what [individuals and organizations](#) can do for other ways to reduce teen alcohol access.

Don't serve alcohol to teens.
It's unsafe. It's illegal. It's irresponsible.

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