

Grade 10-12

16-18 YEARS

Keys to prevention at this age

- Modeling healthy behaviors
- Encouraging participation in healthy activities with positive peers
- Monitoring teen's activities

Your teenager is starting to develop his/her own identity and balance new freedoms. With that new freedom arises more opportunities for your teen to be exposed to high-risk behavior, specifically alcohol use and other drugs. Continue to share your expectations and opinions; they matter to your child, even if it doesn't always seem that way.

Keep your teen safe.

Never provide alcohol to your child or their friends. Not only does it increase your child's risk for alcohol-related problems now and later in life - but it is against the law.

Teach your child to ride a bike, fish, swim or drive...

BUT teaching them to "drink responsibly" or engage in adult-supervised drinking **increases** the likelihood that a child will engage in future harmful use.

Key Influences in your 10-12th grader's world:

- YOU!
- Friends
- Siblings
- Coaches and teachers
- Other family members
- TV, Movies and Social Media



Your child's brain is also growing and changing during their teen years. Recent research has helped us understand that a person's brain is not physiologically mature until their mid-twenties. Alcohol and other drug exposure to a teenage brain may cause loss of memory and interfere with brain development - which can have permanent effects.

When talking to your teen...

- ✓ Try to **ask questions** instead of lecture
- ✓ **Set clear expectations** for your child regarding alcohol use and hold them accountable to those expectations
- ✓ **Share accurate information** (health, school, and legal consequences)
- ✓ **Convey that you care** about and love your child
- ✓ **Empower your child.** Talk to them about how to stand up for their beliefs and decisions. Empower them to take a stand when someone is pressuring them to make high-risk choices
- ✓ Express that you **want to understand** and help your child
- ✓ **Be willing** to back off if your child resists and try another time. Your willingness to back off shows that you are respectful of your child and their privacy

Continue having the conversation. Everything doesn't have to be discussed in a single setting. Also, don't downplay the importance of being a **role model** – set an example of appropriate drinking behavior in your own life. Sharing stories about your own drinking can send a mixed message to your child.

Teenagers will often resist your efforts to discuss the topic of alcohol with them; however, research indicates that teenagers list their parents as their most trusted resource when they are faced with difficult decisions.



A conversation with your child about alcohol may be difficult – but the more you talk with them, the easier it will become.

Children react to discussing alcohol in various ways; here are some possible reactions to expect:

- Suspicion about your sudden interest in the topic
- Doubts that you will understand/respect them
- Fear of hearing a lecture
- Indifference or lack of concern
- Anger for invasion of their privacy