

WAYS PARENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

As a parent, you can:

Set a good example.

Your children are watching you! Be moderate in your own use of alcohol or abstain altogether. Avoid using alcohol as a way to relax or cope with problems. Don't drink under unsafe conditions, such as before or while driving. Your child will not make safe decisions if you don't. A "do as I say, not as I do" attitude just won't cut it.

Lay down the ground rules.

It's your job to teach your child that alcohol is not an option. When parents allow teens to drink as long as they promise not to drive, they are actually more likely to drive after drinking or to ride with an impaired driver. Set reasonable but firm rules that you will enforce. Explain the facts about alcohol as well as your family's opinions and values. Make it clear that alcohol is not an option until your child is 21. Make the legal consequences and your family's rules and consequences known.

Listen to your children.

Research shows that one of the best ways to prevent alcohol use and abuse is communication between parent and child. Pay attention to what your children say, and play an active role in their lives. Build their self-esteem and avoid constant criticism. Let them talk to you without interrupting or taking issue with their point of view.

Talk to your children.

Teach your children that actions have consequences at any age, and every choice matters. Talk to them about alcohol, and everything else! Start early. The teen-age years often bring strong feelings and emotions. Establish a strong foundation by beginning a dialogue in their pre-teen years.

Keep the lines of communication open.

One or two conversations about alcohol with your children is not enough. If you want them to come to you, you're going to have to get comfortable with difficult subjects. Encourage discussion on topics of concern to your teenager: alcohol, drugs, sex and the need for peer group acceptance.

Don't be naive.

Watch for signs of alcohol abuse like dropping grades, switching friends, missing money, and withdrawal – to name just a few. If you sense a problem, seek help. It could save your child's life.

Refuse to supply alcohol to youth.

Be at home when your teen has a party.

Make sure that alcohol is not brought into your home or on your property by your teen's friends.

Talk to other parents about not providing alcohol at other events your child will be attending.

Create alcohol-free opportunities and activities in your home so teens will feel welcome.

Report underage drinking or provision to minors by calling the confidential, toll-free hotline at (770) 822-6513, or (877) CHECKID

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As a parent you want what's best for your teen. Sometimes this includes hosting parties at your home. Well-meaning parents sometimes allow alcohol at these parties and take away car keys in an attempt to keep everyone safe. The truth is that alcohol can harm your teen even when cars are not involved.

Why You Should Prevent Teen Drinking...

Besides death, here are some other risks:

#1 Memory Loss

The equivalent of 1 to 2 alcoholic drinks slows brain receptors involved in the creation of memory. In higher doses, the receptors' activity shuts down almost completely. Alcohol affects a young brain even more than an adult brain. Teens need brain receptors that work at 100% efficiency so they can learn and remember. Alcohol can dumb them down.

#2 Suicides

One in four teens who take their lives were drinking alcohol or did so because of an alcohol-related circumstance. If a teen is already depressed, alcohol will worsen the depression.

#3 Unwanted Pregnancies

Alcohol loosens inhibitions of adults and teens. The combination of teen hormones, desire for physical intimacy, and the breakdown of judgement and self-control caused by drinking often leads to sexual activity, usually unprotected. Did you realize that allowing teen drinking could lead to you becoming a grandparent?

#4 Preventable Diseases

Teen alcohol use is associated with:

- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Higher risk for cancers (throat, mouth, larynx, stomach)
- Hepatitis C (HCV)
- Reduced bone development
- HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (from unprotected sex)

#5 Injury and Mortality

Any trauma nurse will tell you that thousands of teens are admitted each year with brain damage and other injuries from alcohol-related car crashes, falls, fights and other accidents. Some teens recover fully; others are not as fortunate.

#6 Alcoholism

Teens who begin drinking alcohol before age 15 are five times more likely to become alcoholics than adults who start drinking at age 21. For teens, alcohol addiction can happen quickly, especially if there is any history of alcoholism in the family. If your teen becomes an alcoholic, life will not be all you had hoped for your son or daughter.

Legal Consequences for adults who host...

- As a parent, you cannot give alcohol to your teen's friends under the age of 21 under any circumstances, even in your own home, even with their parents' permission.
- You cannot knowingly allow a person under 21, other than your own child, to remain in your home or on your property while consuming alcohol.
- If you break the law, you can face a maximum sentence of 12 months in jail and/or a \$1,000.00 fine.
- Others can sue you if you give alcohol to anyone under 21 and they, in turn, hurt someone, hurt themselves, or damage property.

THIS IS THE LAW!

For unincorporated Gwinnett County, Georgia. Other municipalities may differ.

Risks for Adults...

What You Can Do To Help...