



Talking to Your Teen about Alcohol and Other Drugs

You Have Power!

Even if it doesn't feel like it some days, your parenting makes a big difference in the life of your child. The rules you set, the relationships you build, and the conversations you have about substance use impact the decisions your kids make. Teens who learn about the risks of marijuana, alcohol, and other drugs from their parents/guardians (and know their no-use expectations) are HALF as likely to ever use these drugs compared to their peers. Parent Up encourages you to use the power of your influence to prevent youth substance use!

When talking to your teen about alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, and other drugs, be specific, communicate the dangers, and emphasize your concern for their future.

Talking Tips for Adults of Teens

- First, learn about the harmful effects of alcohol, marijuana, nicotine, and other drugs on young people's developing brains, and make sure all the adults in your house are also on the same page. A great place to find this information is ParentUpKC.com/Drug-Topics.
- Talk often to let your child know you care about their health and safety, and that you are speaking from a place of concern, love, and support. **Of all Americans struggling with addiction, 90% of them started using substances in their teen years**, so it's important to take action to keep your child drug-free.
- Use teachable moments when watching movies, tv, and commercials together that feature drugs, smoking, vaping, and alcohol.
- Keep an open mind and ask questions rather than interrogating your teen: "What do you know about alcohol? Marijuana? What have you heard about drugs at school? What do your friends think about using alcohol or other drugs?"
- Establish family rules and expectations. Work with your teen to establish your ground rules and back up plans. Explain the consequences for breaking these rules and follow through if a rule is broken.
- Compliment your teen on the things they do well and continue to stay involved in their life.

Did You Know?

Teens still care what you think. Express how concerned you are for their health and safety, and the disappointment you would feel if they used alcohol or other drugs.



Did You Know?

As humans, our brains don't finish developing until our mid-twenties (about age 25). Alcohol or drug use during adolescence's critical period of growth can result in permanent negative effects on memory, learning, as well as lifelong addiction.



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