



How to Talk to Your Teen About Alcohol

Avoid the long lectures, instead start with these six simple tips to successfully engage with your teen around the dangers of underage drinking.

Have many conversations, not lectures.

These conversations are not a one-and-done situation. The more you grab natural moments to engage your teen around responsibility, the more impactful you can be instead of one long lecture. It is never too early to start.

Know that your influence makes a difference.

Parents have a larger impact on their kids' decisions than they may think. In fact, kids say their parents are the number one influence on their decision to drink or not drink alcohol. What you say and do around alcohol shapes their choices. Be the example they need.

Be aware of your mood and tone – they matter!

Find natural ways to discuss alcohol in a casual and comfortable setting like when watching movies and TV shows or hearing a story in the news. This avoids lectures and starts with a positive framework. Starting a conversation when you are upset might lead to your teen shutting down.

Talk in terms of safety, not threats.

Research shows teens respond to prevention messages from a safety perspective. Consider sharing the science behind their growing brain versus a lecture based on "because I said so." Always base your conversations on facts and safety and not scare tactics and remind them that it is illegal to drink alcohol underage.

Practice role-playing – it works!

Ask your teen how they might handle a situation involving alcohol in a social setting and help them roleplay responses based on safety. This will help empower them to confidently say "no" to underage drinking.

Be an active listener.

When you talk to teens about alcohol, give them the opportunity to talk about what is important to them. Ask follow-up questions and allow your teen to talk before talking about your own experiences.

BOTTOM LINE

Your teen may not act like it, but they benefit when you set boundaries and when you tell them that you love them and want them to be safe.



For more information on how to talk to your teenager about the dangers of underage drinking, visit

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