

What Can a Parent Do?

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Drinking alcohol has been the number one drug of choice for American teenagers for a very long time. The Monitoring the Future survey for 2008 reported that 16% of eighth graders, 29% of tenth graders and 43% of twelfth graders admit to drinking an alcoholic beverage in the 30-day period prior to the survey. While some teens choose to use other drugs, alcohol remains at the top of the list. What can a parent do to prevent their child from using alcohol? There are several things we all know but sometimes it helps to be reminded.

So, what can a parent do?

- 1) Be your teen's greatest fan. Compliment them on what they do and try to do, as well as who they are.
- 2) Get them involved. Encourage your teen to get involved in after-school activities. Help them find activities that are adult-supervised. The confidence this can create will help prevent them from getting involved in alcohol and drugs.
- 3) Teach them refusal skills. Help your teen learn how to get out of alcohol-related situations by learning refusal skills, such as telling their friends, "My mom would kill me if I drank a beer!"
- 4) Know their friends. Be intentional in getting to know your teen's friends and their parents. You will be able to learn how other parents view underage drinking.
- 5) Make the call. When your teen goes to a party, call and make sure the party will be alcohol-free and supervised by adults.
- 6) Use curfew times. Set curfews and enforce them. Let your teens know the positive and negative consequences for keeping and breaking curfew.
- 7) Maintain an open dialogue. Keep the lines of communication open between you and your teen so that they know they can talk with you about anything.
- 8) Set a family policy. Establish and support a "no-use" rule for alcohol so that your teen has no misunderstanding regarding what you expect of them.

These are just a few tips that will help prevent your teen from using alcohol. You can find more information by contacting the Seven Counties Services Regional Prevention Center at 502-589-8600 or www.sevencounties.org and click on "prevention" under the "our services" tab.

If you suspect or know your teen is using alcohol or other drugs, you can contact the Early Intervention Program (EIP), an assessment and educational program for youth 13-17 years of age, at vserrano@sevencounties.org, or call Vicki Serrano, Prevention Specialist, at 502-439-9699.