



PREVENTION TALK

TALKING WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT ALCOHOL

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Did you know that according to the National Survey on Alcohol and Drug Abuse one in five 8th graders report drinking within the past month?¹

REMEMBER

"71% of young teens say alcohol is easy to get."¹

Teens who drink face many hazards, ranging from accidental injuries to death by alcohol poisoning. Research is beginning to show another danger: brain damage.

Preliminary studies indicate heavy regular drinking can damage the developing brains of teens and young adults. These studies show a link between drinking and lower brain functioning in the areas of learning and memory. Through this research we are learning the impact of alcohol on the visual and auditory processing areas of the brain. Early research told us that the human brain was fully developed at birth. We now know through recent research by Dr. Scott Swartzwelder that the brain is not fully developed until a person's mid 20s and that memory formation is not fully developed until age 16 or 17.²

Research has shown that the earlier young people begin using alcohol the greater the likelihood that they will have problems with alcohol later on in their life.³ As parents we need to work to prevent or at least delay the onset of first use.

Monitoring and supervising your teen is critical. Teens report experimenting with alcohol occurs during the times they are unsupervised. Know where your teens are and with whom they socializing.

For more information call:

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TO THINK ABOUT...

- Does your teen feel confident in using refusal skills with peers when asked to drink alcohol?
- Teens who drink may not realize their maximum potential.
- As a role model, your decision not to abuse alcohol will reinforce your message to your teen. Actions speak louder than words.

ACTION STEPS:

- Share the facts with your teen about alcohol and the effects on the developing body and brain.
- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.
- Set up guidelines and consequences around alcohol use with your teen.
- Practice with your teen ways to say NO to using alcohol. Here are a few examples young teens say have worked for them.⁴
 - ◆ *No thanks.*
 - ◆ *I don't feel like it. Do you have any soda?*
 - ◆ *Alcohol is not my thing.*
 - ◆ *No way! If my parents found out I would be grounded until I am 30.*
 - ◆ *I'm not going to start messing up my life.*
 - ◆ *Why do you keep pressuring me when I have said "No"?*

SOURCES CITED:

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- ³Hawkins, J.D., Catalano, R.J., & Miller, J.Y. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: Implications for substance abuse prevention. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 64-105.
- ⁴Yamhill County Health and Human Services. (2003, April). *Talk About Tuesday*. McMinnville, Oregon: Author.