

# What Families Can Do To Help Prevent Underage Alcohol Use

## Be aware of factors that may increase the risk of teen alcohol use.

- Significant social transitions such as graduating to middle or high school or getting a driver's license
- A history of conduct problems
- Depression and other serious emotional problems
- A family history of alcoholism
- Contact with peers involved in deviant activities

## Be a positive adult role model.

- If you drink yourself, drink responsibly. That means not drinking too much or too often.
- Stay away from alcohol in high-risk situations. For example, don't drive or go boating when you've been drinking.
- Get help if you think you have an alcohol-related problem.
- Do not give alcohol to your teens. Tell them that any alcohol in your home is off limits to them and to their friends.

## Work with schools, communities, and government to protect teens from underage alcohol use by ensuring that—

- Schools and the community support and reward young people's decisions not to drink.
- Rules about underage drinking are in place at home, at school, and in your community.
- Penalties for breaking the rules are well known. Rules are enforced the same way for everyone.
- All laws about underage alcohol use are well known and enforced.
- Parties and social events at home and elsewhere don't permit underage drinking.

## Support your children and teens and give them space to grow.

- Be involved in your teens' lives. Be loving and caring.
- Encourage your teens' growing independence, but set appropriate limits.
- Make it easy for your teens to share information about their lives.
- Know where your teens are, what they're doing, who they're with, and who their friends are.
- Find ways for your teens to be involved in family life, such as by doing chores or caring for a younger brother or sister.
- Set clear rules, including rules about alcohol use. Enforce the rules you set.
- Help your teens find ways to have fun without alcohol.
- Don't let your teens attend parties where alcohol is served. Make sure alcohol isn't available at teen parties in your own home.
- Help your teens avoid dangerous situations such as riding in a car driven by someone who has been drinking.
- Help your teens get professional help if you're worried about their involvement with alcohol.

### Source:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General. (2007). *The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide for Families* (PDF 889KB). Other resources on preventing underage drinking: visit [www.preventionnetwork.org/pam](http://www.preventionnetwork.org/pam) or call Prevention Network at 1-800-968-4968.