

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 or call Prevention Network at 1-800-968-4968.