

Celebrating with a healthy and safe approach

As the school year winds down, there are plenty of reasons to celebrate, especially with graduation and prom in the mix. If your teen plans on attending parties, it is important to make sure they are being responsible and safe. According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving, young people who get a strong message from their parents that underage drinking is totally unacceptable are 80% less likely to drink before they're 21 than kids who don't get such a clear message.

Even though [statistics show](#) that most of our teens are making healthy choices about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD), it can be easy for teens to find themselves in a situation where they are faced with a choice: to drink, or not to drink. As a responsible parent, you can help your teen to understand why it is important to you, and for their health and future plans, that they choose to be ATOD-free.

Parenting Power Tips for Parties

When your teen is attending a party:

- Know where your teen will be.
- Contact the parents of the teen hosting the party.
- Communicate concerns with your teen.
- Agree on a curfew and be up to greet them.
- Verify overnight plans, planned or spontaneous.
- Make sure your teen has an exit strategy, just in case.

When you are hosting a party for your teen:

- Parents must be present and visible at all times.
- Set ground rules with your teen beforehand.
- Set limits.
- Know your responsibilities.
- Familiarize yourself with your city's ordinances and [laws for hosting parties and curfew](#) and liability.

When talking about underage drinking:

- **Ask your teen's views:** Find out what your teen knows and thinks about alcohol. Listen carefully without interrupting. This can serve as a "lead-in" to discussing alcohol topics.
- **Share facts:** Explain that alcohol is a powerful drug that slows the body and mind. Make sure they understand that beer and wine are not "safer" than liquor and how long it takes for a single drink to leave a person's system (1 hour).
- **Discuss reasons not to drink:** Avoid scare tactics. Instead, explain the risks and appeal to your teen's self-respect. Explain that it is illegal and getting caught could keep them from accomplishing their future goals.
- **Plan ways to handle peer pressure:** Come up with a code word they can text you if they are put in an uncomfortable situation and you will call them and go pick them up. The best excuse a teen can have to not give in to peer influence is you!
- **Make it a conversation:** Your teen won't appreciate a lecture but could be much more open to having a conversation. Some are probably curious about drinking and will want to ask you some questions. Encourage them to do so.

From: [Underage Drinking: Talking to your teen about alcohol](#)

Ideas to help prevent underage drinking:

- **Develop a strong relationship with your teen:** Your support will help your teen build the self-esteem he or she needs to stand up to peer pressure — and live up to your expectations.
- **Know your teen's activities:** Pay attention to your teen's plans and whereabouts. Encourage participation in supervised after-school and weekend activities.
- **Establish rules and consequences:** Rules might include no underage drinking, leaving parties where alcohol is served and not riding in a car with a driver who's been drinking. Agree on the consequences of breaking the rules ahead of time — and enforce them consistently.
- **Set an example:** If you drink, do so only in moderation and explain to your teen why it's OK for adults to drink responsibly. Describe the rules you follow, such as not drinking and driving.
- **Encourage healthy friendships:** If your teen's friends drink, your teen is more likely to drink, too. Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.

Conversation Starter

Name 5 things you'd like to accomplish this summer.



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Have a Safe and Happy Summer!



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