

Underage drinking prevention tip

The winter holiday season is almost here. Here are some tips to keep your children safe by promoting healthy choices regarding underage drinking.

Drinking Levels among Youth:

The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (1) found that among high school students, during the past 30 days:

- 45% drank some amount of alcohol
- 11% drove after drinking

The 2008 State of Arizona Youth Survey (2) reported by 8th grade Arizona students that:

- 47% had their first drink of alcohol before age 13
- 23% had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more occasion in the past 30 days
- 12% had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row (binge drinking) in the past 30 days

Is Your Teenager Drinking Alcohol:

It's difficult to know but look for these signs.

- Mood swings: Look for extreme mood change-your child is happy one minute followed by fits of anger or withdrawal.
- Secrecy: Your child begins to show increase levels of secrecy about activities and possessions.
- New friends: If your child is using, he/she will start hanging out with people who share their new interests
- Change in school habits: Is your child skipping classes or suddenly getting bad grades?

Consequences of Underage Drinking:

Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities
- Legal problems, such as being arrested for drinking, or driving and/or physically hurting someone while drunk
- Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity
- Disruption of normal growth and sexual development
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide
- Alcohol related car crashes or other injuries such as burns, falls, and drowning
- Memory problems
- Abuse of other drugs
- Changes in brain development with life-long effects
- Death from alcohol poisoning

Talk with your Children about Alcohol

- Listen: Make the time to listen especially if they ask for a minute.
- Make time: Establishing regular "together time" helps your child to talk
- Talk one on one: With many children, give individual time to each.

Resources

www.theantidrug.com

www.drugfree.org

www.theanti-drug.com

www.timetotalk.org

1. Eaton DK., Kann L., Kinchen SA., et al. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance-United States, 2007. *CDC Morb Mort Surveil Summ* 2008;55(S7-04):1-131. Available at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5302.pdf

2. Arizona Attorney General. (2008). State of Arizona Youth Survey. Available at www.azag.gov/press_releases/oct/2008/2008%20ACJC%20AYS-Statewide.pdf