

# 10

## WAYS TO KEEP YOUR TEEN ALCOHOL FREE



### 1. DON'T WAIT

Even if you think your child is not drinking, know that some children begin experimenting with alcohol as early as 10-14 years old. Act now.

### 2. TALK TO THEM ABOUT THE RISKS

Make sure that they know that teens who drink are more likely to be victims of violent crime, have serious problems in school, and be involved in drinking-related traffic crashes.

### 3. HELP THEM DEVELOP THEIR REFUSAL SKILLS

Even if your child is not yet drinking alcohol, he or she may be receiving pressure to drink. Talk to them about how learning to say "no" can make it easier for them to stay alcohol-free.

### 4. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Choose ideas you are comfortable with, and use your own parenting style in carrying out approaches you find useful. There is no single formula for success.

### 5. KNOW IT IS NOT EASY

During the teen years, fitting in with peers is a priority, and parents often feel shoved aside. But study after study shows that even during this period, parents have enormous influence.

### 6. SET THE RIGHT TONE

Parental disapproval of underage alcohol use is a key reason children choose not to drink. So make no mistake: You can make a difference.

### 7. MAINTAIN A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

The best way to influence your child to avoid drinking is to have a strong, trusting relationship with them. Teens are much more likely to delay drinking when they have a close tie with a parent or guardian.

### 8. ESTABLISH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Making it easy for your teen to talk honestly with you allows them to better deal with stress or other factors that might lead them to drink alcohol.

### 9. DRAW THE LINE

Set clear, realistic expectations for your child's behavior. Establish appropriate consequences for breaking rules, and consistently enforce them.

### 10. OFFER ACCEPTANCE

Make sure your teen knows that you appreciate his or her efforts and accomplishments. Having a positive self-image can help them stand up to the pressure to drink.



## A PARENT'S ROLE

Parents play a crucial role in protecting their teens from drinking alcohol. Open communication is key; parents should discuss the risks and consequences of alcohol use honestly. Setting clear expectations and rules about alcohol consumption is essential, alongside consistently enforcing these rules. Monitoring your teen's activities and knowing their friends can help parents stay informed about potential influences.

Drinking responsibly and not glamorizing alcohol use also sets a positive standard. Encouraging teens to engage in extracurricular activities can help them build confidence and find positive peer groups. Educating teens about how to handle peer pressure is vital, as is offering them strategies to say no effectively. Lastly, fostering a supportive and trusting relationship with your teen allows them to feel comfortable discussing their problems and seeking advice, reducing the likelihood of turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
[www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/parent-resources](https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you/parent-resources)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/bam/alcohol.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/bam/alcohol.htm)