

## PREVENTING TEEN ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE: WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

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As young people move into their teens, parents face seemingly endless challenges to ensure their adolescents' health and safety - an increasingly difficult and stressful task as teens push for more independence. Parents want to ensure that their teens make the right choices, hang out with the "right" people, and live productive, alcohol- and drug-free lives.

It is important for parents to know the facts about alcohol and drug use and to be prepared, considering nearly a third of 12- and 13-year-olds has been offered and used an illicit drug. However, it's promising that when teens know the facts, dangers, and risks associated with drug use they are 42% less likely to use them.

To help teen parents and families prevent and address teen alcohol and drug abuse, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Health Information Network created *Caring for Our*

*Youth* Web site

(<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/cfoy.aspx>).

The Web site includes quick links to information, available for quick download or hard-copy mail order. The resources offer parents and families access to trusted information to help prevent and address alcohol and drug use, including research and facts, signs and symptoms, tips for talking to teens, and more. Some resources are also available in Spanish.

When parents are actively

### Resources

#### **SAMHSA**

<http://www.samhsa.gov>

1-877-SAMHSA-7

#### ***Caring for Our Youth***

<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/cfoy.aspx>

1-800-729-6686

#### **Too Smart To Start**

<http://www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov>

#### **Substance Abuse Treatment Facility**

**Locator** 1-800-662-HELP

<http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

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involved in their teens' lives, teens are more apt to avoid circumstances involving alcohol and drugs. Research shows that teens who are not regularly monitored by their parents are four times more likely to use drugs, compared with regularly-monitored teens.

The family guide, *Keeping Your Kids Drug Free* offers the following tips for teen parents:

- Know what your children are doing — their activities and how they spend their time.
- Know who your teen's friends are.
- Check in with the parents who are hosting the party your teen will be attending.
- Praise and reward good behavior.
- Before going out, have them tell you:
  - WHO they are going to be spending time with
  - WHAT they will be doing
  - WHEN or what time they will be at their expected destination
  - WHERE they are going to be. Every once in a while, check on your teens to see

if they're where they said they would be.

*It's not pestering, it's parenting.*