

**STATISTICS SPEAK VOLUMES.
PARENTS, IT'S TIME TO
TALK 2 PREVENT.**

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug among youth in the United States. Talk to your teenager about not drinking, and keep the conversation going. They'll listen.

31%

of seniors reported at least one episode of binge drinking during the past two weeks.



Most kids who consume alcohol do so in their own home or in the home of a friend



49%

of high school seniors in NY have consumed alcohol in the past 30 days – that's more than 100,000 seniors.

What is binge drinking?



five or more drinks at one time for males



four or more drinks at one time for females

YOU CAN KEEP KIDS SAFE FROM ALCOHOL AND DRUGS. LEARN HOW.

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov



Talk 2 Prevent



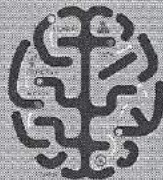
1 OUT OF 3

13-year-olds in NYS has tried alcohol



7x

A teen who begins drinking before the age of fifteen is 7 times more likely to have an alcohol abuse problem later in life than someone who waits until age 21 to drink alcohol.



Research indicates the brain continues to develop into the mid-twenties. Alcohol use can have a detrimental effect on the developing brain.



52%

Nearly 52% of NY students in grades 7-12 reported their parents had never talked to them about the dangers of underage drinking.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Talk Today, Tomorrow and Always – Don't Ever Stop Talking.

Sitting down for the "big talk" about alcohol can be intimidating for both you and your child. Try using everyday opportunities to talk, such as in the car, during dinner, or while watching TV together. Having lots of little talks takes the pressure off in trying to get all of the information out in one lengthy discussion, and your child will be less likely to tune you out.



Use real world examples that your kids would know about. Celebrities, sport figures and musicians are too often in the news for their substance use.

"Hey I heard about... What do you think about that?"



Be honest. If there is a history of alcoholism or drug abuse in your family, tell them about it. If you can, tell them all the details about who is struggling and how it impacts everyone in the family. If it is you, tell your kids your experience and treat it as you would any other disease.

"I worry because we aren't like everyone else, and you have a higher risk for developing a drug or alcohol problem."



Be real and let them know just how dangerous it really is.

"Did you know it only takes [this much] alcohol before you are too impaired to drive?"



Empower your child, ask them what they think and what they think you should know.

"What do you think is the biggest issue facing teens today? How do you face it?"



Know what you are talking about!

"I read that x in 10 kids your age are drinking. I know it might not be you, but it's probably happening with your friends and with people you know. Do you want to talk about it?"



Stay strong. Your kids may answer with a yes or no, may be defensive or angry. Don't stop the conversation. Take a breath and start again.

"Did my question upset you? Why, help me understand what you are feeling"



Be aware of and sensitive to their transitions, such as starting middle school or high school, a break-up, the loss of a friend, or graduation.

"This is different time for you – are you scared, curious or concerned? I went through all this too. Let me tell you how it affected me"

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

Need help? Call 877-846-7369



Talk 2
Prevent

MAKING THE TALK COUNT AT EVERY AGE

As with all things with kids, one size does not fit all, this is especially true when talking with them about alcohol, your concerns and expectations. What you say to a 9-year-old about alcohol is different from what you say to a 15-year-old.

A clear no-use message is the most effective way for parents to help keep their kids safe from the many dangers associated with underage alcohol use. REMEMBER Children also can't learn all they need to know from a single discussion- lots of little talks are more effective than one "big talk." Here are some tips to help!

Preschool

It may seem premature to talk about alcohol but by preschool, most children have seen adults drinking alcohol, either in real life, on TV, or online. The attitudes they form at this age have an important impact on the decisions they will make when they are older. At this early age, they are eager to know and memorize rules, and they want your opinion on what's "bad" and what's "good."

Ages 5 to 8

Children this age have an increasing interest in the world outside the family and home. Now is the best time to begin to explain what alcohol is, that some people drink it even though it can be harmful, and the consequences of them drinking it. If you and your child see someone who is drunk on TV or on the street, explain that getting drunk is never good and could be dangerous.

Ages 10 to 12

During the tween and preteen years, kids will assert their independence and question authority, but they need your input and advice more than ever. In fact, when it comes to discussing alcohol and drugs, this is one of the most important times in their life.

Tweens understand the reason for rules and appreciate having limits in place- be sure they know your rules about alcohol use and the consequences if they break these rules.

Talk out some real-life situations and brainstorm solutions for what they can say. For instance: "My mom (or dad) would kill me if I drank alcohol". Be sure your tween knows that they should not continue friendships with kids who have offered them alcohol or other drugs.

Base alcohol-related messages on facts -- not fear. Tweens love to learn facts about all kinds of things. You can take advantage of their passion for learning to reinforce your message about alcohol and drugs.

REMEMBER this is a tough time for your tweens - puberty can erode your child's self-confidence and cause them to feel insecure, doubtful, and vulnerable to peer pressure. During these years, give your tween lots of positive reinforcement and praise them for their efforts and successes.

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

Ages 13 to 18

Your teen will most likely know other kids who use alcohol or drugs. Most teens are still willing to express their thoughts or concerns with parents about it. Use these conversations not only to understand your teen's thoughts and feelings, but also to talk about the dangers of alcohol such as violence, sex and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Talk about the legal issues and the possibility that they or someone else might be killed or seriously injured.

Abstinence is important and underage drinking should not be considered a "rite of passage" or something "they're going to do anyway"

Teenagers tend to be idealistic and want to help make the world a better place. Tell your teens that underage drinking is not a victimless crime, and the effect it has on our society.

Make it clear that drinking is not permitted under any circumstances and let your teen know that you trust them not to drink alcohol.

Help your child build self-reliance by asking them how they plan to deal with situations such as being offered alcohol or being invited to ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

Wait for your teen to return from being out with friends so you can chat about what happened. Strive to convey love and concern not mistrust.

The first time you have evidence that your teen has been drinking, confront them. Don't minimize it.

Ages 18 and older

College-age students will encounter drinking on- and off campus. Find out about a college's record of drinking-related incidents and its alcohol policy before your child enrolls. Talk about your findings with your child.

**Remind your child about the dangers of binge drinking and alcohol poisoning.
As always, stay connected with your child to learn how best to help him or her.
Get more information about your college aged conversations in our parent toolkit!**

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

SIGNS & RED FLAGS

The following signs may indicate a problem with alcohol or other drugs, some also are natural changes or “growing pains” for kids as they grow and mature. However, experts believe that a drinking problem is more likely if you notice several of these changes at the same time or if they occur suddenly, and if some of them are extreme in nature. If you notice some of the following changes with your child, it’s a time to start a conversation.



Physical

- **Alcohol presence:** finding it in your child’s room or backpack or smelling alcohol on his or her breath.
- **Bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils**
- **Changes or slurred speech**
- **Memory lapses**
- **Poor concentration or inability to focus** as they once did
- **Sleeping in extra late**
- **Feeling ill** after spending time with friends



Social Life

- **Persistent or intense** about going out with friends
- **Friend changes:** switching friends or hanging out with new friends and reluctance to letting you meet them
- **Not checking in with you** as they once did
- **Breaking curfew**
- **Frequently attending parties** or group hangouts
- **Discussing alcohol or drug use** on social media



School Life

- **Grades dropping**
- **Lack of interest** in sports or extracurricular activities they were once involved in
- **Poor attendance**
- **Recent disciplinary action**



Personality

- **Feelings of stress or added stress**
- **Mood changes:** flare-ups of temper, irritability, and defensiveness
- **Rebellion against family rules**
- **Lack of energy** or lack of involvement in former interests,
- **Sloppy appearance-change** in commitment to getting ready

Other “Red Flags”



Household items missing such as:

- **Money**
- **Alcohol**
- **Prescription drugs**



Personal Items

- **Eye drops**
- **Breath mints & mint tins** or other small containers
- **Interest in apparel** that promotes alcohol or drug use
- **Red cups** being used as décor or to store items in their rooms

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

THE

(Your Family Name)

PROMISE

ADOLESCENT/TEEN

I recognize that there are many potentially destructive decisions I face every day and commit to you that I will do everything in my power to avoid making decisions that will jeopardize my health, my safety and overall well-being, or your trust in me. I understand the dangers associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs and the destructive behaviors often associated with impairment.

By signing below, I pledge my best effort to remain free from alcohol and other drugs; I agree that I will never drive under the influence; I agree that I will never ride with an impaired driver; and I agree that I will always wear a seat belt.

Finally, I agree to call you if I am ever in a situation that threatens my safety and to communicate with you regularly about issues of importance to both of us.

Young Person | Date

SIBLING

As an older brother/sister I know my influence is critical and I can protect my sibling from mistakes I may/may not have made. I will not encourage younger brothers and sisters to drink and will not give them alcohol. By signing below, I pledge to do everything in my power to understand and communicate with you about the many difficult and potentially destructive decisions you face.

I also pledge to you that I will not drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, I will always seek safe, sober transportation home, and I will always wear a seat belt.

Sibling | Date

PARENT (OR CARING ADULT)

I am committed to you and to your health and safety. By signing below, I pledge to do everything in my power to understand and communicate with you about the many difficult and potentially destructive decisions you face.

Further, I agree to provide for you safe, sober transportation home if you are ever in a situation that threatens your safety and to defer discussions about that situation until a time when we can both have a discussion in a calm and caring manner.

I also pledge to you that I will not drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, I will always seek safe, sober transportation home, and I will always wear a seat belt.

Parent/Caring Adult | Date

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

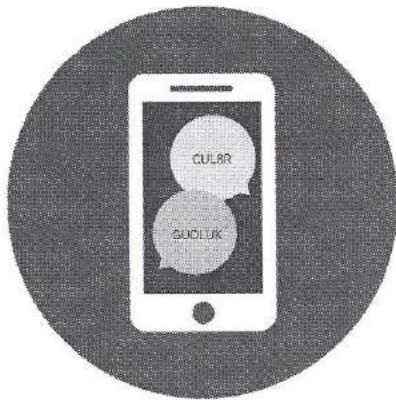
Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

TEXT T PREVENT

Kids constantly texting? Join them in their chosen way of communicating by texting them as well. Texting with teens is a great way to connect with them and continue communicating about alcohol and its risks. So text-away! You'll be able to stay in touch, let them know you're thinking about them, and remind them to avoid underage drinking.



Teens talk in code.
Learning that code is important.

Teen Text Talk 101:

Don't be intimidated by the codes – most of them come from dropping vowels or replacing words with numbers for the sake of speed.

Examples:

BCUZ	Because
BTW	By the way
CUL8R	See you later
H&K	Hugs and kisses
F2T	Free to talk
JK	Just kidding
TTYL	Talk to ya later
GUDLUK	Good luck
Mber	Remember

It might be hard to keep up with all the changing terms, but as long as you are being clear, your teen will get the message.



At a loss for words? We got you covered! Try some of these!

(True, there tends to be a lack of proper punctuation, grammar and spelling when texting. It's all part of the texting culture.)

- If u feel pressured - don't give in - get out! We will come get u.
- Alcohol is a drug and is addictive.
- Your real friends won't care. If there is alcohol tell them "Not for me"
- Yup it's me - have fun - luv u!
- One choice can change everything- Alcohol lowers your judgment, u may do some thing that u will regret!
- I trust you to make good decisions 2nite. Let me know if you need anything. Mber here for u!
- Be careful tonight. If your friends offer you a drink just say you promised me no.
- Have fun tonight. Keep your curfew in mind. Call me if you need anything.
- Have fun B safe-you are the best thing in this world! Mber that!
- Promises-mber ours! Be safe tonight. Love you.
- There is a link tween alcohol and HIV-WOW!
- Have fun 2night. Stay safe. Don't drink.



www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov

Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE BRAIN

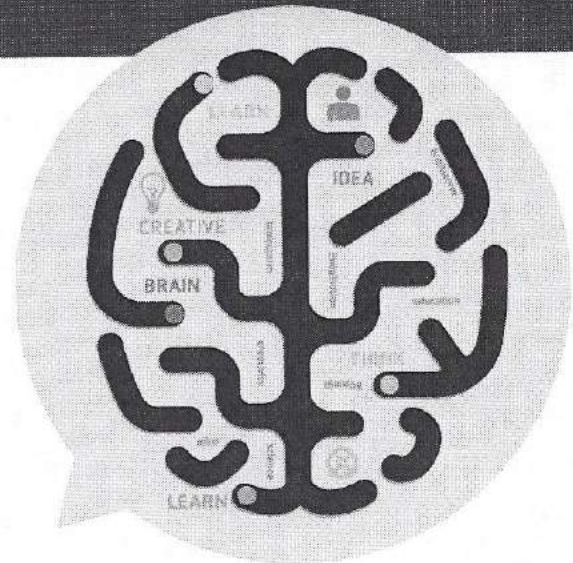
Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. Alcohol can appear to be a stimulant because, initially, it depresses the part of the brain that controls inhibitions.

CEREBRAL CORTEX—Alcohol slows down the cerebral cortex as it works with information from a person's senses. In the cerebral cortex, alcohol can affect thought processes, leading to potentially poor judgment. Alcohol depresses inhibition, leading one to become more talkative and more confident. Alcohol blunts the senses and increases the threshold for pain. **As the BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) increases, these effects get more pronounced.**

CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM—When a person thinks of something he wants his body to do, the central nervous system—the brain and the spinal cord—sends a signal to that part of the body. Alcohol slows down the central nervous system, making the person think, speak, and move slower.

FRONTAL LOBES—The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. When alcohol affects the frontal lobes of the brain, a person may find it hard to control his or her emotions and urges. The person may act without thinking or may even become violent. **Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.**

HIPPOCAMPUS—The hippocampus is the part of the brain where memories are made. When alcohol reaches the hippocampus, a person may have trouble remembering something he or she just learned, such as a name or a phone number. This can happen after just one or two drinks. **If alcohol damages the hippocampus, a person may find it hard to learn and to hold on to knowledge.**



CEREBELLUM—The cerebellum is important for coordination, thoughts, and awareness. A person may have trouble with these skills when alcohol enters the cerebellum. After drinking alcohol, a person's hands may be so shaky that they can't touch or grab things normally, and they may lose their balance and fall. **Imagine how this effects a person's ability to drive.**

HYPOTHALAMUS—The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of the body's housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the work of the hypothalamus. **After a person drinks alcohol, blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase while body temperature and heart rate decrease.**

MEDULLA—The medulla controls the body's automatic actions, such as a person's heartbeat. It also keeps the body at the right temperature. Alcohol actually chills the body. Increased consumption of alcohol can lead to unconscious. **Needless to say, alcohol's effect on the medulla can be fatal if it is excessive.**

www.Talk2Prevent.NY.gov
Need help? Call 877-846-7369



**Talk 2
Prevent**

Sources

• Office of the Surgeon General. (2007). The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce • Underage Drinking (PDF 141MB) Rockville, MD: 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 900KB) Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. • Reach Out Now Teach-In Lesson Plan.

**Parents:
Did you
know?**

**The messages you
send your kids can
affect their choices
and behaviors?**

Research has shown that one of the biggest protective factors in reducing the likelihood your child will develop a substance abuse problem is strong parental disapproval of alcohol and drug use.

Some actions and behaviors by parents, while not intentional, may encourage underage drinking and drug use and contribute to your child's perception of the encouragement of use.

Do you ever reach for a drink in front of your kids saying "I had a tough day?" This can make alcohol seem like a good way to relive stress and something you **NEED** to relax.

Do you tell drinking stories in front of your kids? Laughing about heavy drinking can seem like alcohol is always necessary to have fun and encourages them to drink.

Do you ever ask your kids to get you a beer or other alcoholic beverage for you?

Do you offer alcohol to your teen as a special treat for celebrations, family gatherings, etc?

Do you ever encourage your friends or other family members to drink more in front of your kids? This could make kids think "more drinks, more fun" and teaches them that it is o.k. to give into peer pressure.

Do you have alcohol in your home that is readily accessible to your child?

Does your child observe you drinking to excess?

Does your child observe you drinking and then driving?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, you may be unintentionally sending mixed messages to your child and could be implying that it's ok for him or her to drink and experiment with alcohol.

What you can do:

Remaining clear and consistent, and avoiding messages that glorify or promote alcohol use is a good way to provide your children with the role modeling that they need to keep them from underage use.

For more information, visit:
talk2prevent.ny.gov or [Facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent](https://www.facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent)



**Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services**

Parents:

Tips to Help Prevent Underage Drinking

Limit Access

- If you have alcohol at home, keep track of it, know what you have, how much you have and keep it where it is not accessible to teens.
- Thank store clerks for carding.
- Alert the police if you have information about where and how teens are getting alcohol in your community.

Network

- Get to know your teen's friends.
- Get to know the parents of your teen's friends. Know what their rules are up front so you don't have to accept the argument of "everyone else is allowed to..."
- Let the parents of your teen's friends know what your rules and expectations are and where you stand on alcohol use.

Reinforce and Enforce

- Reinforce the rules and consequences of underage drinking before your teen goes out.
- Frequently explain the reasons behind the rules so your teen understands these are protective factors for them, not just a restriction on their freedom.

- Enforce the rules consistently. Don't look the other way if they violate them. They need to know you are serious about the rules and they will be accountable for violating them.

Check In Often

- Before they go out, ask if an adult will be present and if there will be alcohol.
- Ask them to check in with you.
- Develop a secret text code to signal when your child may need help getting out of a sticky situation.
- Trust them but verify. Check in with other parents about your teen's activities or drop by where they will be.

Be Up and Be Ready

- Wait up or set the alarm for curfew time. Talk with them about their night.
- When they arrive home, look for signs of use. Teens who believe their parents will catch them are less likely to drink.
- Be prepared in advance for what you will do the FIRST time you discover your teen has been drinking. Think ahead of time how you want to react and how you will reinforce the consequences.

For more information, visit:

talk2prevent.ny.gov or [Facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent](https://www.facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent)



Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services