

Celebrating with a healthy and safe approach

As the school year winds down and the weather warms up, 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 any 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 most of the time 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; To smoke, or not to smoke. 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.

PARENTS USE YOUR POWER Most local teens are alcohol and drug free

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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 wait up for 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: Limits are Love!
- Know your responsibilities.
- Familiarize your self with:

[Guidelines for Parties and the Laws](#)

When you talk about underage drinking, you might:

- **Ask your teen's views.** Find out what your teen knows and thinks about alcohol.
- **Share facts.** Explain that alcohol is a powerful drug that slows the body and mind, and that anyone can develop an alcohol problem — even a teen without risk factors for alcohol abuse.
- **Debunk myths.** Teens often think that drinking makes them popular or happy. Explain that alcohol can make you feel "high," but it's a depressant that also can cause sadness and anger.
- **Discuss reasons not to drink.** Avoid scare tactics. Instead, explain the risks and appeal to your teen's self-respect. If you have a family history of alcoholism or drinking problems, be honest with your teen. Strongly discourage your teen from trying alcohol — even as an adult — since there's a considerable chance that your teen could develop an alcohol problem, too.
- **Plan ways to handle peer pressure.** Brainstorm with your teen about how to respond to offers of alcohol. It might be as simple as saying, "No thanks" or "Do you have any pop?"
- **Be prepared to discuss your own drinking.** Your teen might ask if you drank alcohol when you were underage. If you chose not to drink, explain why. If you chose to drink, you might share an example of a negative consequence of your drinking.

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. Don't serve alcohol to anyone who's underage.
- **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.

Have a Safe and Happy Summer!



Tom Cicero
1305 W. Oswego Rd
Naperville, IL 60560
630-961-2992 x235

tcicero@360YouthServices.org

www.ThePowerofChoice.info

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