

HELP YOUR TEEN SAY NO

Your teen can learn to resist alcohol or anything else he may feel pressured into. Let him know that the best way to say "no" is to be assertive—that is, say no and mean it.

- Stand up straight
- Make eye contact
- Stand up for yourself
- If necessary, blame authority. "My dad will be waiting up for me when I get home." "My coach would bench me."

WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Experts believe that drug or alcohol abuse is more likely if you notice several of these signs are the same time, if they occur suddenly, and if some of them are extreme in nature.

- Mood changes
- School problems
- Rebelling against family rules
- Switching friends
- A "nothing matters" attitude
- Finding alcohol or drugs in your teen's room or backpack
- Physical or mental problems

If your teen is experiencing these signs, seek help. Some resources are listed on the back of this pamphlet.

FAIRFAX COUNTY TIP LINE

School administrators encourage students and community members to report school safety issues, such as dangerous rumors, bullying, and drug use. Tip Line users may remain anonymous, calls will not be traced.

Tip Line phone number is [571-423-2020](tel:571-423-2020) or text [571-418-6870](tel:571-418-6870); use the keyword *TIP*—an automated banner will respond allowing you to text in information.

TALKING TO YOUR TEEN

RESOURCES

Langley High School Resources--
http://www.fcps.edu/LangleyHS/student_services.html

Safe Community Coalition Resources--
<http://safecommunitycoalition.net/alcohol/>

Sagebrush Treatment Center--
<http://sagebrushva.com>

Dominion Hospital--
<http://dominionhospital.com>

Community Services Board--
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/about/>

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids--
www.drug-free.org/the-parent-toolkit/

Parents Who Host Lose the Most--
<https://www.drugfreeactionalliance.org/parents-who-host>

Nat'l Instit. Of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism--
http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/MakeADiff_HTML/makediff.htm

Focus on the Family--
www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/parenting-challenges/

Fairfax County Youth Survey--
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/demogrph/youthpdf.htm>

Virginia Dept of Alcoholic Beverage Control--
www.abc.virginia.gov



TALKING TO YOUR TEEN

Conversation tips for parents as they talk to their teens about drugs and alcohol

Created by the LHS PTSA Family Network Committee in partnership with the Langley High School Student Services Department
2015-16

WHY??

Why do I need to talk with my teen about drugs and alcohol? All teens experiment; it's normal.

- Teens who drink are more likely to be involved in unhealthy risky behavior, including impaired driving, poor academic performance, and unwanted sexual activity.
- 90% of all adults with drug and alcohol problems started using before the age of 18 and half before 15.
- Parents can have a major impact on their teen's drinking.
- Teens who believe that their parents are against drinking and drug use are less likely to try them. Parental disapproval acts as a "buffer" against peer pressure.
- Children of "permissive parents" who are more accepting of drugs and alcohol or who leave decisions about them to their teens are more likely to have children who abuse substances.

REASONS NOT TO DRINK

- It is illegal to consume alcohol before the age of 21.
- 90% of adults with drug and alcohol problems started using before the age of 18 and half before the age of 15.
- Alcohol affects teens differently than adults.
- There is a family history of abuse or addiction.

HOW??

How do I talk to my teen so that they will listen?

Your goal is to get your message across effectively and to leave the door open for further conversations.

- Encourage conversation. Encourage your child to talk about whatever interests him. Listen without interruption. This paves the way for conversations about more difficult issues.
- Keep it private. Drugs and alcohol are sensitive subjects. You want to maximize honesty and minimize embarrassment.
- Ask open-ended questions. These are often *who*, *what*, *when*, *how* or *why* questions. Such as,
 - How did that make you feel?
 - Why do you think they did that?
 - What other options might there have been?
 - What do you think you could have done differently?
- Set expectations. Establish your expectations for your teen's behavior. Follow up that expectation by knowing where he is going, enforcing curfews, and talking to him when he comes home at night. By holding him accountable to your expectations, you provide him with a reason not to drink.
- Control your emotions. If he makes generalizations or critical remarks, don't take them personally and get side-tracked.

SCENARIOS

Here are three scenarios to help you think about your conversation with your teen...

Your teen comes home smelling of alcohol or cigarette smoke for the first time.

Your response—Should be measured, quiet, and serious. Your teen needs to realize that this isn't just a frustrating moment like when he didn't do his chores, but it's very big, very important, and very serious. You can say, "I'm really upset that you're smoking/drinking. I need to get a handle on how often this has been happening and what your experiences have been so far. I get that you're worried about getting in trouble, but the worst part of that moment is over—I know you're experimenting. The best thing you can do now is to be really straight with me, so tell me..."

Your teen has started to hang out with kids you don't know, and she has dropped her old friends.

Your response—Should convey concern, support, and genuine interest. You can say, "It seems like you are hanging with a different crowd than you have in the past. Is something up with your usual friends? Are you just branching out and meeting new people? Tell me about your new friends? What are they like? What do they like to do? What do you like about being with them."

Your teen admits he is drinking, but assures you that everyone in his group drinks so it's perfectly normal.

Your response—Should convey that his definition of normal does not match your family's. Remind him that although his immediate group may be drinking, MOST teens his age are not, so it is NOT normal. You can say, "I understand that your group is drinking, but we expect you to wait to drink. Tell me who you hang out with at school or on the team that is not drinking. Maybe you can spend more time with her."