



## A Parent's Guide to Preventing Underage Drinking

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*As a parent, you play a key role in guiding your child regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs. With this guide we aim to provide you with five strategies to prevent teenage drinking and drug use.*

# THE FIVE STRATEGIES

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- 1** Learn what's going on in your child's life
- 2** Develop open and regular communication
- 3** Set expectations and consequences
- 4** Be a positive role model
- 5** Build a close and caring relationship

# Alcohol and drug use can negatively affect a teens development

**SHORTTERM RISKS**

Accidents i.e. Car crashes, falls, burns, drownings

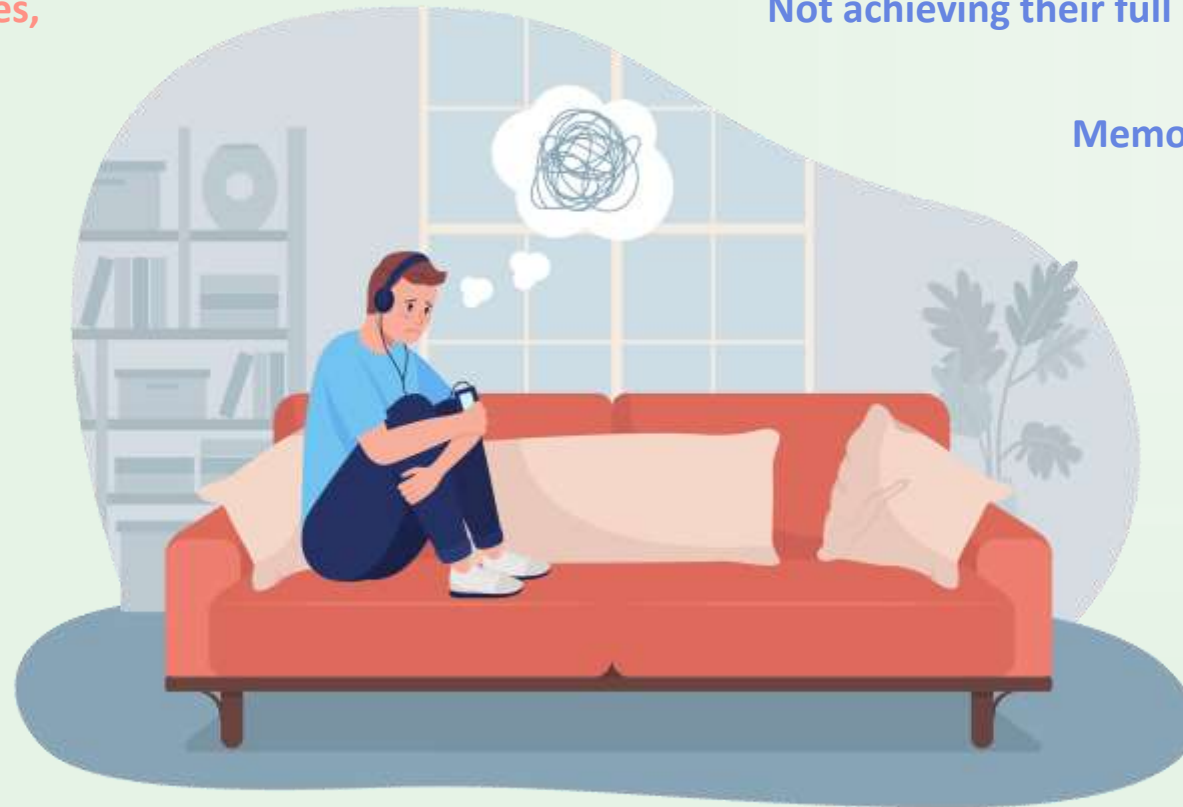
Alcohol Poisoning

Memory problems

Trouble with the law

Struggling with school

Difficulty dealing with emotions and problem solving



Not achieving their full potential

Memory problems

Social and family issues

Mental illness

Dependence

Legal or money problems

**LONGTERM RISKS**



## 1. Learn what's going on in your child's life

*Know who your child spends time with, where they are and what they are doing.*

*If your child is going to use alcohol or drugs, they will generally do it with friends and when adults aren't present.*

- **If your teen is going to a friend's house, ask if an adult will be present.**
- **Have them check in whilst they are out.**
- **Agree on a curfew.**
- **Ask how they are getting home.**
- **Establish a relationship with your teen's friends and their parents.**
- **Discuss the pros and cons of internet usage and block inappropriate websites from your WIFI.**
- **Encourage your teen to seek friends with good integrity.**
- **Don't spy and snoop.**
- **Being too strict can cause children to rebel.**



## 2. Develop open and regular communication

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*Communication between a parent and child allows both to explore areas of interest and worries. The way you communicate has a big impact on preventing or delaying alcohol or drug use.*

- **Attempt to make it a conversation, not an interrogation with yes or no answers.**
- **Discuss your concerns about the risks of drug and alcohol use.**
- **Talk as early and often as you can.**
- **Ask your teen what they think about drugs and alcohol.**
- **Explore ways to manage peer pressure.**
- **Discuss how alcohol and drugs are glamorized in the media.**
- **Be clear about your expectations and rules around alcohol and drug use.**
- **Learn the facts before approaching the conversation.**
- **Think about your body language and tone of voice.**

### 3. Set expectations and consequences together

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*Setting clear expectations helps create an environment where rules are respected. Establishing boundaries early on means there is no uncertainty about your rules.*

- **Set rules before your child actually uses alcohol or drugs.**
- **Work together to create rules and consequences.**
- **Base these on the age and maturity of your child.**
- **Make sure you and your teen have a clear understanding of your expectations.**
- **Stay calm when following through with consequences.**
- **Be consistent and follow through with consequences immediately.**







## 4. Be a positive role model

*When a child has a positive role model, they are likely to engage in constructive actions like the person they look up to.*

*Children notice more than you think. Your teen will be heavily influenced by what you say and do.*

- **Show your teen that you have fun without substances.**
- **When people come over to your house, provide non-alcoholic options.**
- **Don't get drunk or high when your teen is around.**
- **Let your family and close friends know about the values you are teaching your child and ask them to model responsible behaviour.**
- **Remember that how much and when a parent chooses to use alcohol or other drugs will affect your child's decisions about their own use.**
- **Children learn behaviours by observing adult role models including teachers, coaches, and older siblings.**
- **Show and talk about healthy ways to manage stress such as going for a walk after a busy day or meeting friends.**



## 5. Build a close and caring relationship

*A close relationship can help delay when youths first try alcohol and drugs. A close bond encourages your child to discuss their problems and concerns with you. It also encourages conversations about making good choices.*

- **Support your teen to find their passions and interests.**
- **Be involved. Participate in activities that interest your child.**
- **Make time for your teen. Spend one-on-one time together when possible.**
- **Remind your child that you love and care for them often.**
- **Notice when your child makes good choices and praise them for their efforts and achievements.**
- **Encourage your child to discuss problems and concerns with you.**
- **Chat while you eat, walk, and watch TV together.**
- **Remember to build your child's confidence. Teens who are confident are more likely to make better choices in life.**
- **Respect your teens independence but stay connected.**

# USEFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND TEENS

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## **Where to get mental health support as a youth**

To get help for your mental health you'll need to talk to someone who can put you in touch with your local children and young people's mental health services.

This is called 'a referral'. You could speak to a teacher, GP, youth or social worker.

[Get help for alcohol and drug addiction](#)

[Club drugs: The risks, effects and dangers](#)

[Teen drug addiction](#)

[Student guide to alcohol and drug misuse](#)

[Cannabis addiction](#)

[How to help an alcoholic](#)