

Wholly Healthy

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 3

DECEMBER, 2009

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Merry Christmas

KEEPING YOUR TEENS DRUG & ALCOHOL FREE

The biggest deterrent to your teens' using alcohol or drugs is **YOU**. You are the most powerful influence in your child's daily life. Children who learn about the risks of drug and alcohol abuse from their parents or caregivers are less likely to use drugs than children who do not. Teens who learn anti-drug messages at home are 42% less likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol.

Over 60% of parents admit they don't talk enough with their children about alcohol. The earlier young people start to drink, the greater the chances they will develop problems with alcohol later in life. Alcohol can affect your health if consumed in large amounts on a regular basis. It harms the **liver, heart and brain**—three of our most vital organs. It is important for adults who drink to do so safely and responsibly. Adults who are parents serve as role models for the teens who live with them. We can all choose to live chemical-free and live a healthy life for as long as possible. It is a natural part of being "Wholly Healthy" in **mind, body and spirit!**

Remember, conflict comes with parenting. This is especially true when discussing such touchy subjects such as drug and alcohol abuse. But it is important to remember: **it's not pestering; it's parenting.**

Wellness Council

Signs & Symptoms Of Teen Drug Use

- Drop in grades
- Withdrawal
- Change in friends
- Hostility
- Depression
- Excess fatigue
- Increased secrecy
- Change in eating habits
- Change in sleeping habits
- Borrowing money
- Using incense
- Smell of alcohol
- Decrease in household alcohol supply
- Increased interest in sleep-overs

Risk Factors for Drug Use

- Chaotic home environments, particularly in which parents abuse substances or suffer from mental illnesses
- Ineffective parenting, especially with difficult children
- Lack of mutual attachments and nurturing
- Failure in school performance
- Poor social coping skills
- Affiliations with deviant peers
- Perceptions of approval of drug-using behaviors in the school or peer community

Protective Factors for Drug Use

- Strong bonds with the family
- Experience of parental monitoring with clear rules of conduct within the family unit and involvement of parents in the lives of their children
- Success in school performance
- Strong bonds with institutions such as the family, school, religious organizations
- Adoption of conventional norms about drug use
- Prevention programs at school that are age-appropriate
- Social competence and drug resis-

December is.....
DRUG &
ALCOHOL
AWARENESS
MONTH

DEPRESSION: Dispel the Myths...Learn the Facts

What is depression? Clinical depression is a serious health problem that affects the total person. It is more than the everyday ups and downs. It can change behavior, physical health and appearance, academic performance and the ability to handle everyday stress.

How common is it? A lot more common than you think, and it affects people of all ages. About 3-5% of the teen population experiences it every year, about 1 in 25 of your friends!

Treatment? Psychotherapy and/or antidepressant medication.

Symptoms: feelings of sadness, hopelessness, guilt, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, irritability, change in eating and sleeping habits, chronic physical complaints, change in academics, introduction of alcohol or drugs, talk of death or suicide.

Common myths: *Teenagers are 'moody' and don't suffer from 'real' depression.

*Teens are weak and need to pull themselves together.

* Talking about depression only makes it worse.

* Telling an adult that a friend needs help is betraying a trust.

Fact: *Teens can benefit from therapy to help them learn more positive ways to think about themselves, change behavior, cope with problems, or handle relationships.

*Depression saps energy and self esteem, interferes with the ability to ask for help.

The most important step in overcoming depression is asking for help.

PARENTING SKILLS: TIPS AND IDEAS TO HELP YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1. GET INVOLVED

Establish together time.

Ask where your teens are going, who they are with and what they are doing.

Try to be home when your teen gets home from school especially 4-6 PM.

Eat together as often as you can.

2. LEARN TO COMMUNICATE

Be a better listener and give honest information and answers.

Don't react in a way that cuts off further discussion.

Role play different situations to refuse drugs or alcohol and help script your teens.

3. WALK THE WALK

Be a living, day-to-day example of your value system and examine your own behavior.

4. LAY DOWN THE LAW

Set a curfew and enforce it.

Have kids check in at regular times.

Call parents whose home is to be used for a party or stop in to say hello.

Make it easy for your child to leave a party where drugs are being used and talk about it later.

5. PRAISE AND REWARD

Reward good behavior consistently and immediately. Expressions of love go a long way.

Accentuate the positive.

Emphasize the things your teen does right and make her feel good about herself.

Courtesy of the National Drug Control Policy

www.theantidrug.com