

LET'S KEEP TALKING

A guide for parents to talk with their teens about

NOT DRINKING



INTRODUCTION

As a parent of a teen, you have reached an exciting time in life for both you and your son or daughter. From teaching them to ride a bike and tie their shoes, to talking them through the growing pains of friendships and school-related issues, your positive parenting has paid off. Over the years, you have been the one to talk with them when they needed support or insight.

As your teen prepares to embark on the next chapter of life, whether to go to college or to take on other adult responsibilities, now is a great time to reinforce your family's position on waiting to drink alcohol until he or she is 21. Talk with your son or daughter—and keep talking—*he or she is listening more than you know!*

This information was designed for parents and concerned adults to support them in having informed conversations about making responsible choices, including the decision to wait until young adults are 21 to consume alcohol. After all, we are parents, too, and care very much how people use our products.

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YOUR OPINIONS MATTER

UNDERSTAND YOUR INFLUENCE

Parents are the single most important influence on children’s decision to drink, yet many parents do not fully understand the extent of their influence. That’s why it’s important to continue maintaining an open line of communication with your teen by talking with them every day, celebrating their achievements and accomplishments, and encouraging smart choices. Most parents already have begun this through a lasting relationship built upon trust, reliability and honesty. Your teen needs and wants a positive relationship with you. You can be his or her most important role model.

Teens are often very concerned about being accepted by their peers. That’s why peer pressure can play a major role in the decisions teens make. While teens grow more independent and increasingly focused on their own lifestyle and culture, parents often become uncertain about their role in their teenager’s life.



PEER PRESSURE CAN BE POSITIVE

However, you can help your teen understand that the decisions he or she makes should be well-informed and healthy. Understand that peer pressure is real but can be a positive influence. Goal setting and self-direction, together with friends who support similar ideals, can help provide a good environment for your teen. For parents, the need to communicate openly is even greater when the topic is personal. As teens will say, their parents are the greatest influence on their lives and decisions.



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TEEN

Open, two-way communication is particularly important when talking about the use of alcohol. *Your teen needs to know that you strongly believe that an underage person should not drink alcohol under any circumstance—at a party, with other peers or adults, or alone.* This also means not consuming alcohol even if parents or friends or older siblings provide it while in the security of their homes.

Social host laws abound across the country and can lead to serious consequences for everyone involved. Ask your son or daughter if he or she has been in situations where underage drinking occurred. If so, ask how he or she handled the situation. Together, explore options for what your teen could do if in that position again—or better yet, to anticipate when that situation might occur and then make other plans.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES TO SHARE WITH YOUR TEEN

- Find out in advance whether there will be parental supervision at a party.
- Decide with a friend, in advance, not to drink so you don’t feel alone.
- Coordinate reliable transportation (you, mom or dad) so you don’t have to rely on someone else when you feel you need to leave a party.
- Take non-alcohol drinks to a party for yourself and others who choose not to drink.
- Plan activities (rent movies, play games or plan another fun activity that engages you and your friends).
- Leave if you feel uncomfortable.
- Decide not to go and plan a fun activity that won’t involve drinking alcohol.



BE INFORMED

THE TRUTH ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING

ADDRESS MISCONCEPTIONS

You should always remain honest about the possibility that your teen (or 20-year-old) will be faced with an opportunity to consume alcohol.

Teens have exaggerated misperceptions regarding how often and how much their peers drink. One of the most important things that parents can do is to correct the misconception that most teens are drinking heavily by using specific facts and data. Please use the resources we have sourced at the end of this book and a checklist of topics we are covering to go over with your teen.

KNOW THE LAWS & REGULATIONS

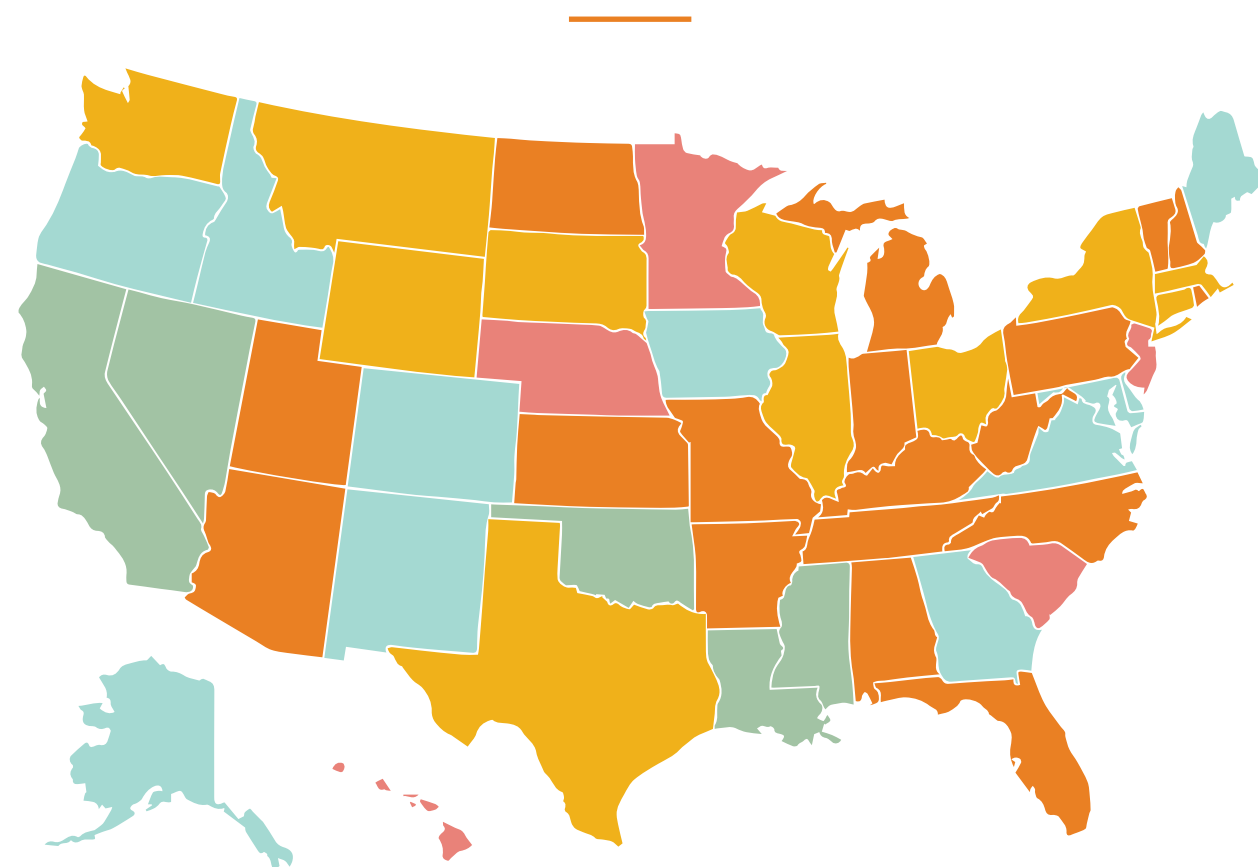
Both you and your teen should know what the law says about underage drinking. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse accepted by law enforcement. Parents should inquire about all current local laws and ordinances that pertain to underage drinking and its legal consequences. Share these facts with teens and older siblings to help them make responsible decisions before negative situations occur that could possibly affect their health and safety.

IN MOST STATES:

- It is illegal to purchase or consume alcohol if you are under age 21.
- It is illegal to purchase alcohol for minors.
- It is illegal to sell or serve alcohol to minors.

Many states have laws making “social hosts” responsible for underage drinking events on property they own, lease or otherwise control, whether or not the social host actually provides the alcohol. Be informed. Find the alcohol laws in your state here¹.

UNDERAGE POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL STATE LAWS AND EXCEPTIONS



- Possession is prohibited with NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Possession is prohibited unless parent, guardian or spouse consents and/or is present.
- Possession is prohibited unless on private property.
- Possession is prohibited unless parent, guardian or spouse consents and/or is present OR unless on private property.
- Possession is prohibited unless parent, guardian or spouse consents and/or is present AND on private property.

¹ <https://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/apis-policy-topics/possessionconsumptioninternal-possession-of-alcohol/42/maps-and-charts>

CONSEQUENCES OF DRIVING INTOXICATED

Intoxication is caused by the amount of alcohol in your bloodstream (known as the blood alcohol concentration level or BAC). You and your teen should know the legal BAC limit in your state for drivers younger than 21. In some states, people under 21 found to have any amount of alcohol in their

systems can lose their driver's license, be subject to a heavy fine and/or have their car impounded². Your teen could be prevented from entering a profession because of a drunk driving offense. One drink can cause a minor to fail a breath test. Your teen should know the law and the consequences.



PARENTAL INFLUENCE

On occasion, parents unknowingly facilitate teens' unacceptable behavior. Research indicates that minors obtain alcohol primarily from non-commercial sources such as friends, parents and other adults. Social availability of alcohol to teens can only be addressed by changing adult attitudes about teen use.

Sadly, some parents and older adults still believe drinking alcohol while underage is a "rite of passage," or is okay as long as the keys to the car are taken away. These beliefs send mixed—and dangerous—messages. Look for any situation in which you might inadvertently provide the resources and opportunity for teens to engage in irresponsible or illegal behavior. It may also be helpful to lock up and monitor the alcohol you keep in your home to avoid temptation and stem curiosity when teens are home alone.

² Source: <https://www.dmv.org/automotive-law/dui.php> (Relevant in CA, FL and more)

Q & A



Q: My daughter just turned 21, and her friends are pressuring her to buy alcohol for the group, even though they are minors.

A: Your daughter's concerns are legitimate. Just as there may be pressure to drink underage, there also can be pressure on an of-age person to buy alcohol for underage friends and siblings, or to share an ID card. The only legal and socially acceptable response is "No way." Possible consequences include being arrested, substantially fined or even incarcerated for providing alcohol to minors.

Q: My son is 21, of legal drinking age. If he is at a party where alcohol is served and underage people are present, could he get in trouble?

A: Yes, your son may be held accountable just by attending a party where alcohol is served to minors. Anyone at the party may be arrested even if he or she did not drink. The same rule applies if your child rides in a car that has an open container.





BE PROACTIVE YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

Being a teen today is much more difficult than it was 20 years ago, and being the parent of a teen is even more of a test. But parents nationwide are excelling at providing the proper direction and setting a good example. As a parent, you have the opportunity to provide a constructive foundation for your children simply by your own behavior and attitude. Your actions are important to your teens and affect their decisions about drinking.

- If you choose to consume alcohol, drink responsibly.
- Be aware of the amount of alcohol kept in your home.
- Have non-alcohol beverages available, even for adult parties.
- Set and enforce household rules that incorporate a “no tolerance” policy for underage drinking.

#1 INFLUENCE IS PARENTS

71% of 13-to-17-year-olds in the U.S. cite their parents as the #1 influence on whether they drink or not, an increase of 29% since 1991.

GfK Roper Youth Report. Developed from an online survey of 1,003 Americans age 13-17, conducted online 2008-2016; data are weighted based on online population estimates from MediaMark's (MRI) American Kids and Teens Survey.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY HABITS

Part of interacting with teens means getting to know their friends and their friends' parents. Sometimes parents have to be creative when establishing times and places young people can socialize. Friday or Saturday evenings could be pizza and movie night at your house. One way to be involved without interfering is by serving food and soft drinks at various intervals. The key is that you are there during the party,

check in now and then, and make sure alcohol is not present.

Remember, actions speak louder than words, particularly when they come from you. As a parent, you can be the positive role model—at home and in the community—who clearly sends out the message that underage drinking should not be part of the teen experience.

DETERMINE LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR TEENS



As you know, many teens act as if they are invincible. They know that people can be injured as a result of bad decisions, but they find it hard to think that this could happen to them. Because teens need to learn to be accountable for their own behavior, parents can provide guidelines to help them do that. Establishing family rules can prevent emotional confrontations

when problems arise. Teens need to know the boundaries, and parents need to stick to the rules. Clear rules and consequences help them understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior and to appreciate the positive role they can play in their family and in the community.



MAKING RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS

Teens believe that underage drinking is a personal choice, but the fact is that it's illegal. Buying or providing alcohol to minors is also a serious offense. The consequences can be numerous, including being in a traffic crash, having an arrest record, hefty lawyer's fees and fines, higher insurance rates, suspension from a team, revocation of a scholarship, and suspension or expulsion from school.

If your teen is in a situation where someone is severely affected by alcohol, encourage your teen to seek help by calling 911. Survey results indicate that the #1 reason young people do

not intervene in cases of overdose is because they do not perceive it as a medical emergency. It may be hard, but teens need to understand that you expect them to call 911 for anyone who shows signs of a blackout—irregular heartbeat, slowed or stopped breathing, choking, extreme dehydration and dangerously low body temperature.

**NATIONALLY
UNDERAGE
DRINKING IS ON
THE DECLINE**

COLLEGE AND THE NEXT CHAPTER

It's important for parents to understand what often goes on at college campuses across the country. The nation's "Healthy People 2010" initiative identified binge drinking among college students as a major health problem. While colleges vary widely in their drinking rates, the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services are committed to reducing the frequency of "drinking to intoxication" at campuses nationwide.

Many universities and colleges have implemented alcohol policies and stricter enforcement to address underage drinking and alcohol abuse. Also underway are efforts to implement mandatory education programs, provide an array of social and entertainment options, and increase alcohol-free housing, awareness activities and other special programs. However, your influence as a parent remains the most important factor in affecting your teen's perception and consumption of alcohol.



It is important for you to ask questions when visiting colleges and to request a copy of the school's policies regarding student alcohol consumption. Make a list of questions that you and your teen can use at each campus. Get a clear understanding of the code of conduct by which students are expected to live.

Note: Talking with your teen about alcohol—not just once, but many times—will go a long way as he or she moves on after graduating from high school and begins adult life in the real world. While your 18-year-old may still be your "baby," he or she is legally an adult and will be expected to behave accordingly.

It is also important to know that many teens head off to college with a preconceived idea that "everyone" drinks alcohol at college. This is not the case. It is important that your teen knows that the vast majority of students do not personally engage in negative behaviors. Despite this simple truth, teens have been misled to believe

the opposite by a culture that glorifies college drinking. It is important for them to know the reality and make good choices as they enter this exciting time in their lives, knowing that there are many, many others who share their commitment to avoid drinking-related problems and get the most out of their educational experience.

Whether your teen enters the workforce right after high school or has a different life path than college, it's important to talk with them about the ramifications of drinking. Discuss with your teen that having a job means that the boss will expect people to show up for work on time, well-rested and ready to put in a full day.

Your teen's social media accounts are a key way to talk with them about making smart decisions. Their public social media persona can have a long-lasting effect on their professional lives. A single post may have unintended consequences long into their future.



KEEP TALKING

In the U.S., record-low levels of college freshmen drink beer (30.3%), down **44%** from its peak in 1981.



The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2015, UCLA, 2015: <http://heri.ucla.edu/monographs/TheAmericanFreshman2015.pdf>

Take advantage of “moments of opportunity” before your teenager enters high school and then again when graduating. Ask your teen for his or her opinion about alcohol—and ask often.

A golden opportunity for candid talk is when your teen is preparing for his or her driver’s license training or exam. When you are together practicing, ask what he or she thinks is the best part about getting a license. It is natural for young people to feel a sense of freedom that comes with the chance to drive on

their own. This is a great time to share your thoughts about responsibility and the consequences that go hand in hand with that freedom.

Stress that driving is not a right but a privilege that can be revoked by your state—and by you as a parent. Many young people will acknowledge that drunk driving is illegal but don’t think through all of the implications and hazards if they do so.

Before initiating a discussion about how your teen feels about alcohol being legal for adults and not for teens, be prepared to respond to questions your son or daughter may have. Some questions may include: When did you start drinking? What was the reason you started? Be prepared to respond honestly. Describing the negative consequences you experienced because of drinking may help to build open communication and trust. Also point out that more is known now about the negative impact of underage drinking on brain development.

As parents, you should be commended for all of your work in guiding and educating your teens. If you have frank and open discussions with your teen about underage drinking, congratulations. Continue to foster an open door of communication. Your teen will appreciate your protection and leadership, even if he or she doesn’t openly show gratitude.



BEYOND YOUR CONTROL

ASK FOR HELP



Remember that actions speak louder than words, particularly when they come from you. If your child has a problem, seek help.

Many local communities offer programs on substance abuse awareness and parenting skills. Take advantage of training sessions that suggest positive ways to strengthen family relationships, such as shared mealtimes. Learn more about what teens enjoy doing and develop shared interests.

There are a number of signs that could indicate your teen might have issues related to underage drinking: falling grades; new friends who are different from your child's past friends; alcohol missing from the home; sudden, excessive rebellion; and depression. If you feel that your teen may need help, counselors, doctors and clergy are often good resources for guidance and support.

We at MillerCoors are encouraged that underage drinking is declining nationally. We care about the responsible enjoyment of our products and partner with local, state and national agencies, educators, parents and law enforcement officials to help prevent underage access, reduce drunk driving, implement new legislation and promote responsible (and legal) decision-making regarding the consumption of alcohol beverages.

We know teens drink less often than adults, but they drink more per occasion. This can impair their judgment and put them and others at risk of physical harm and dangerous behavior. We understand the reality around today's drinking culture—after all, we're parents too. This is why we have put together the *Let's Keep Talking: A Resource for Parents to Talk With Their Teens About Not Drinking* e-book. We are committed to being a leader in preventing youth access to alcohol.



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We thank William DeJong, PhD, of the Responsible Retailing Forum in Waltham, Massachusetts for his advice during the preparation of this document.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DontServeTeens.gov

Find key facts and learn how you, your community and the media can take steps to reduce underage drinking.

AlcoholPolicy.NIAAA.NIH.gov

The Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS) provides detailed information on a wide variety of alcohol-related policies in the United States at both state and federal levels.

DMV.org/Automotive-Law/DUI.php

This website allows you to find the most up-to-date state laws and regulations for driving under the influence and how it will affect your driving privilege.

SAMHSA.gov

Find the most recent *National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, along with additional resources.