

Teen Alcohol and Drug Use on the Rise

The Partnership for a Drug Free America warns parents that more teens are using alcohol and marijuana.

After a decade of steady decline, high school teens reported an 11% rise in drinking alcohol. In 2009, the decade of decline ended – with 6.5 million teens using alcohol.

More teens are also using marijuana and Ecstasy. Last year, an increased number of teens reported that

- Being high feels good, and
- Their friends often get high at parties.

Alcohol and drug use at a young age is a problem. Many teens will try these substances, then stop. However, others will become dependent and unable to stop. Some will move on to use more harmful substances.

Colleges also report that alcohol use among underage students is high. Forty percent of college students report at least 1 symptom of alcohol abuse or dependence. Binge drinking - 5 or more drinks on one occasion - remains a problem, especially for females aged 21 – 23.

Some colleges are asking parents for help. They have a new policy for notifying parents of underage drinkers. They call parents when they find students under 21 guilty of drinking. This includes first-time violations. These schools report a decline in repeat offenders.

Studies show that parental disapproval of drinking protects misuse of alcohol in college. If parents allow their *teens* to drink high levels of alcohol, the kids are more likely to drink heavily in college. This includes males and females.

Parents influence teens. Let your teen know you disapprove of under-age drinking.

- Observe her behavior.
- Get to know his friends.
- Be especially watchful at times when she is likely to drink alcohol: parties, homecoming and prom.

As soon as you suspect your teen is using alcohol or drugs, get help. Warning signs include:

- Fatigue
- Red glazed eyes
- Irritability
- Change in personality
- Depression
- Irresponsible behavior
- Withdrawing from the family
- Drop in grades
- Negative attitude
- Starting argument
- Skipping school.

Use your influence to keep your teen safe.



Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

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