

# Two-thirds of parents admit that they don't talk enough with their children about alcohol.

VARIOUS REPORTS CITED BY THE CENTURY COUNCIL

[WWW.STOPTEENDRINKING.ORG](http://WWW.STOPTEENDRINKING.ORG) in the Free Stuff area of the web site. Just having the card visible tells your child that you are concerned.

- 4 Have that talk.** Only make it a CONVERSATION. Being prepared will make this necessary step more comfortable for all the family. Know that this will likely be the first of many conversations. Talking with your child about alcohol is not a one-time event.
- 5 Listen. Stay involved.** The most important part of discussion is listening, really listening to your child's thoughts and concerns. Show respect even when you don't agree. Get to know your child's world—friends and their family, school counselors, teachers and coaches. Support positive alternatives, such as sports and other after-school activities. More than "talking to your child about alcohol", your constant attention shows that you care and respect your son or daughter.

People who begin drinking before age 15 are 4 times more likely to develop alcohol dependence at some time in their lives (compared to those who have their first drink at 20 or older).

## FUTURE DRUNKS

Only 31% of parents of 15–16-year-olds believe their child had a drink in the past year, compared to the 60% of teens in that age group who reported drinking.

## WHO'S IN DENIAL?

**WE SUPPORT A NEW BAR CODE**



**NO UNDERAGE DRINKING**  
[WWW.STOPTEENDRINKING.ORG](http://WWW.STOPTEENDRINKING.ORG)

## Keeping Alcohol Away From Your Child

A PARENT'S SURVIVAL GUIDE



### ALARMING TREND

Alcohol has been tried by 44 percent of eighth graders, 64 percent of tenth graders, and 77 percent of twelfth graders; active use is also widespread.

Teenagers whose parents talk to them regularly about the dangers of drugs are 42% less likely to use drugs than those whose parents don't, yet only 1 in 4 teens reports having these conversations.

### PARENT POWER

**IT'S THAT EASY?** Approximately 2/3 of teenagers who drink report they can buy their own alcohol.

**AND YOU THOUGHT IT WAS ASPIRIN**

**BEER BUDDIES**  
65% of the youth surveyed said that they got the alcohol they drink from family and friends.

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among young people.

### KNOWING WHAT TO DO

Being a parent can be the hardest job. You want your child to like you. You may feel that bringing up the subject of using alcohol will push your child away from you even more. Yet, sometimes care and understanding is not enough. You need to take action.

Part of growing up for kids is taking risks and testing limits, and your child will inevitably make risky choices; now more than ever they need your help and guidance, before they begin using. As kids grow older, their drinking behavior becomes less influenced by parents and more by peers.

- 1 Overcome your fear.** Sure, it's tough. Maybe you drink alcohol and are afraid you'll appear to be a hypocrite. But research shows that you are the single most powerful influence in a child's life—more than their peers, more than their teachers, especially in a young teen's life. Your actions make a difference. If you drink alcohol at home, start today by keeping all alcohol under lock and key. Remember that 50% of 9th graders report getting alcohol from parents or another adult.
- 2 Get armed with information and develop a game plan.** Go to [WWW.STOPTEENDRINKING.ORG](http://WWW.STOPTEENDRINKING.ORG). This web site is your local gateway to scores of resources that provide concrete suggestions on steps to take. If you need immediate help, the Resources page provides Mendocino county contacts for prevention, counseling and treatment.
- 3 Put the reminder card ("Tip Card for Parents") on your refrigerator today.** If you don't have one, you can download a copy from

How and when do you talk to young children about alcohol? When should you call and whom should you call for help? Where can you get immediate help in Mendocino County if you suspect your teen is already using? How can you get culturally appropriate information?

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**The number one reason adolescents give for choosing not to use alcohol is their parents. When parents talk to teens about drinking, those teens are less likely to use alcohol.**

**DR. DAVID SATCHER, FORMER U.S. SURGEON GENERAL**

**ISN'T THIS JUST PART OF GROWING UP?**

By the time a young person finishes **eighth grade**, more than half will have tried alcohol. 52% of 15-year-olds say they either drink at home or at a friend's house.

Despite your best efforts, that day may come when you suspect that your child is using alcohol. Whether it's a clear signal, like cans or bottles in the car, or just a gut instinct, what do you do? How do you know if you need to do anything? Where can you turn for help?

It's better to act **BEFORE** your child has started drinking. But know it's never too late to help your child stop.

Before you dismiss the importance of trying that first drink of alcohol as "just a rite of passage", consider this:

Youth who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at 21. (NIAAA, 1997)

Alcohol abuse is linked to as many as 2/3 of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students. (CASA)

Underage drinking is a factor in nearly half of all teen automobile crashes, the leading cause of deaths among teens. (AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS)

Drinking alcohol before the brain is finished developing (around the age of 21) causes damage to the areas of the brain responsible for learning and memory. (AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS)

**WARNING SIGNS**

## What should you look for?

- Negative changes in schoolwork; missing school or declining grades
- Increased secrecy about possessions or activities
- Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g. more secretive or "coded" language
- New friends
- Changes in clothing, such as clothes that highlight drug use
- Increase in requests for money
- Masking agents: Increased use of eye drops, which may be used to mask bloodshot eyes, or mouthwash and breath mints, which could cover up the smell of alcohol
- Missing cans of beer or suspicions that liquor tastes watered down