

Important Facts About Drugs and Alcohol

Parents may not realize just how available illicit drugs are to their children. They may not realize how young children are when they begin to experiment with alcohol and drugs. Statistics can be sobering, and can alert parents to the need to communicate with their children about the dangers of substance abuse and help them develop strategies to cope with peer pressure.



Cough Syrup Abuse
Cough syrup preparations are also fast becoming one of the most common drugs of abuse among teens. The active ingredient of many cough syrups is dextromethorphan (DXM), which if taken in large doses can cause visual hallucinations and a heightened



Teenage Drug Abuse

Parents who are informed are parents who can best cope with the pressures and influences their children face when it comes to alcohol and drug use. Many parents of today grew up during those decades of exploding youth drug experimentation, so they believe they know and understand the temptations and the risks their pre-teen and adolescent children face. There are many designer drugs available today that did not exist 20 or 30 years ago. Marijuana potency has increased exponentially in the last 20 years. And to this day, myths persist about alcohol that lead many parents to tragically miss signs of serious trouble, because they think it is "just alcohol."



Create - Connect - Communicate



Learn strategies to keep in touch with your children before they become teenagers, and you will be in a better position to understand the pressures they face and communicate your concerns and expectations.

Create a safe, supportive environment for teaching about the dangers of drug and alcohol use.

Connect with teens to find out what they know, how they feel and what pressures they face.

Communicate clearly what you expect and what the consequences of use will be.

The word "expectations" may have negative connotations, but by letting your child know what behaviors you will and will not accept, you help set the tone for their adolescence.

Adolescent Substance Abuse Knowledge Base,
For more information go to: <http://www.adolescent-substance-abuse.com>

The Risks of Hosting Teen Parties

Parents who host teen parties should be aware of their liability should teens sneak in alcohol. Saying that you did not allow the alcohol is not enough to protect you, especially if you let these teens drive home and they cause an accident.



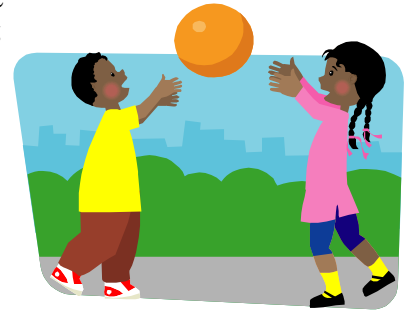
IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE WITH YOUR ADOLESCENT:

- **Be specific** – Explain to your child that drugs can inflict significant damage, that you absolutely disapprove of their use, and that your adolescent needs to be prepared to say "no" when presented (or pressured) with drugs.
- **Be realistic** – Don't overstate your case. For example, exaggerating the dangers by telling your child that one drink or one toke can ruin their life may cause them to discount all of what you are telling them. Stick with the facts – reality provides plenty of information about the very real devastation that drugs can cause.
- **Be supportive** – Your adolescent needs to know that you're on their side. Let them know that they can confide in you without fear of reprisal if they're being pressured to drink or take drugs, and continue to role-play or discuss ways to avoid situations where drugs and alcohol are likely to be present.

CONTACT THE FEDERATION OF FAMILIES OF SOUTH CAROLINA for help.
Toll Free: (866)779-0402 or in Columbia at (803)772-5210. email: info@fedfamsc.org
Website: www.fedfamsc.org

Keeping Kids Safe

Parents who are concerned about their children's involvement with alcohol or other drugs should be on the lookout for the following [signs of adolescent substance abuse](#):



- Sudden changes in behavior or attitude
 - Changes in academic performance, including a loss of interest in school
 - Decreased interest in appearance and personal hygiene
 - Withdrawal from friends and family members
 - Secretiveness, lying, and other types of evasiveness
 - Sudden mood changes and dramatic emotional outbursts
 - Fatigue, exhaustion, or periods of unexplainable increases in energy
 - Bloodshot eyes, sudden changes in weight, and other physical symptoms
 - Insomnia (inability to sleep) or hypersomnia (excessive sleeping)
- Parents who discover that their children are abusing alcohol or another drug have a number of options, ranging from outpatient therapy to wilderness therapy to a residential recovery program for teens.

Adolescent substance abuse can wreak devastation both on the young person and the family, but help is available – and effective treatment can help both client and loved ones pursue healthier and more satisfying futures.

