

All parents have a role in preventing unsafe alcohol use among youth. Early use of alcohol can lead to great substance use issues later in life. Here are steps you can take to promote alcohol safety.

### **Talk early and often**

Parents' opinions matter to their kids. In fact, this is one of the biggest reasons that they make safe choices about alcohol use. Talk early and often with children and teens about alcohol. Be clear about your expectations. Answer any questions. Keep the lines of communication open.

### **Store alcohol safely and out of sight**

Try to avoid storing alcohol in an open area, like a counter. The ideal place is inside a locked cabinet. An alternative is a closed cabinet in a hard-to-reach location. This includes beer, liquor, and wine.

### **Set firm family policies around alcohol**

Rules around alcohol use at home should be clear, consistent, and firm. When children and teens know this, they are more likely to respect parental expectations. Your rules could include:



- **NO DRINKING UNTIL THE LEGAL AGE OF 21**
- **ANY ALCOHOL CONTAINERS IN THE HOUSE ARE ONLY TO BE HANDLED BY ADULTS**
- **OLDER SIBLINGS OR FRIENDS MAY NOT PROVIDE ALCOHOL TO ANYONE WHO IS NOT 21**
- **KIDS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND PARTIES WHERE ALCOHOL IS PRESENT**

### **Model responsible alcohol use**

How you consume alcohol is a model for your kids and how they use it. Do not drink to excess. Do not drink and drive. Do not provide alcohol to anyone who is under 21 years of age.

### **Teach your kids how to say "No"**

Peer pressure can cause kids to make unsafe choices. So give them the tools they need to stay strong. You can:



- Role play and practice refusal conversations
- Teach them to never accept a ride with someone who has been drinking
- Agree on a simple text that they can send if they need help – then you can call or pick them up to give them an "out" of the situation