

ODS+ENDS, Inaugural Issue

UNDERAGE DRINKING

Signs Your Child May Be Using Alcohol (DETECTION)

- Changes in friends; drastic changes in interests.
- You have received information, or know first-hand, that your child's friends drink alcohol. Your child is most likely doing what their friends are doing.
- Your child tells you that they are using, or have used alcohol.
- Suspicion that your child drinks expressed by their friends, friend's parents, his/her sibling(s), or from school, church or other educational or social activities in which your child is involved.
- Missing liquor from your supply of alcohol
- Declining grades.
- Increased secrecy about possession or activities.
- Subtle changes in conversations with friends (using coded language).
- Use of perfume or breath mints to cover alcohol smell.

How to Talk to Your Child about Alcohol (PREVENTION)

- **Start early:** Talking about alcohol should be an on-going conversation. It is not a one-time five-minute talk.
- **Be Open-** If you have alcohol problems in your family (parents, grandparents, uncles/aunts, etc.) your child is at increased risk of developing an alcohol problem. Talk to them about this and tell them your concerns.
- **Be clear:** Let your child know that you do not want her/him to use alcohol. It is important for your child to know that they will face consequences if they use alcohol.
- **Listen to your kids:** Give your child an opportunity to ask questions.
- **Do your homework:** Be ready to answer questions. If you don't know, don't make up answers. Let your child know that you will find the answer for him/her.
- **Know where your child is:** When your child leaves the house, ask where they are going, whom they are with, and when they will be home.
- **Know her/his friends:** Have your child's friends over to the house, and contact adult supervision when they spend time outside of the home.

If You Think your Child is in Trouble with Alcohol (INTERVENTION)

- **Show your concern:** Tell your child why you are concerned about his/her behavior and how it makes you feel.
- **Don't rush:** This conversation should take place when you have plenty of time.
- **Stay calm:** Try to stay calm and remember that by staying involved with your child you are trying to help him/her improve his/her life.
- **Listen:** Don't do all of the talking. Give your child a chance to speak.
- **Follow Through-** It is important to activate consequences if you established them during the Prevention phase of discussion. Consequences should be tailored to the seriousness of the drinking behavior, but **MUST** be followed in order to be effective.

TREATMENT:

If your child needs treatment call 1-800-662-HELP or find a treatment center near you at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov. Local resources may also be found on our Web site at www.denvergov.org/drug_strategies

Additional Information:

Underage drinking is one of the most significant dangers facing our youth today. According to the Surgeon General's Call to Action, young people between the ages of 12 and 20 are more likely to use alcohol than use tobacco or illicit drugs, including marijuana. Although adolescents tend to drink less frequently than adults, they drink considerably more per occasion—5 drinks on average. Underage alcohol use, and especially binge drinking—a particularly harmful pattern of drinking—puts individuals at risk for a range of problems including risky sexual behavior; physical and sexual assaults; potential effects on the developing brain; problems in school, at work, and with the legal system; various types of injury; car crashes; homicide and suicide; and death from alcohol poisoning. By age 15, approximately 50 percent of boys and girls have had a whole drink of alcohol; by age 21, approximately 90 percent have done so.

Visit the following sites for more information and tips:

www.timetotalk.org

www.drugfree.org

www.theantidrug.com

www.freevibe.com

www.thecoolspot.gov

www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

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