

# A Parents' Guide to Teen Parties

PARENT SUPPORT SERIES

**As a parent,** you know the importance of your teen's social life and that parties are a way to socialise and relax. But an unsupervised or poorly planned party can result in unwanted or even tragic consequences. However, parental responsibility is the key to a fun and safe party.



## Facts about teen parties

**Guest List.** When a teen plans a party, news spreads very quickly via social networking sites like Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. This means that teen parties can grow too large and get out of control.

**Time and Place.** Teen parties often start late at night and move from house to house.

## Facts about alcohol and drugs

**Teens often expect alcohol and drugs at parties.** Some parents believe that it is better to allow teens to drink in their home so they can keep them safe. While this idea may be well intentioned, it could be misguided. It can still be difficult for Parents to keep impaired teens safe.

### Help Your Child Learn Different Ways to Say 'NO!'

Teach your child how to respond to someone offering drugs. It is much easier to say "No!" when prepared ahead of time.

It helps if you role play and practice. This way, it becomes natural to do at least one of the following:

- Firmly say, "No!"
- Give a reason — "No thanks, I'm not into that." or "No, my parents would get really mad at me."
- Suggest something else to do, like watch a movie or play a game.
- Leave — go home, go join other friends.



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**Alcohol affects teens differently than adults.** For example, compared with adults, teens are more likely to remain awake, to wander about, or to drive a car.

**Alcohol and other drugs impair judgment.** Teens are more likely to have sex, be involved in a violent incident, or suffer an injury or worse after using drugs or alcohol.

**Parents are legally responsible for anything that happens to a minor who has been served alcohol or other drugs in their home.** If anyone brings alcohol or other drugs to your home, be prepared to contact their parents. And if someone comes to your home already intoxicated, make sure that they get home safely. Help your teen feel responsible for this as well.

**Parents may be criminally or civilly liable if...**

- Alcohol is provided to a minor at a party they have organised.
- Someone's property is damaged.
- Someone is injured.
- Someone leaves and gets into a car accident and/or injures someone else.
- Someone dies.
- Understand the local laws about alcohol and other drugs.

## If you are hosting a teen party...

**Plan in Advance.** Go over party plans with your teen. Encourage your teen to plan non-alcohol-related group activities or games.

**Keep parties small.** Ten to fifteen teens for each adult. Make sure at least one adult is present at all times. Ask other parents to come over to help you if you need it.

- **Set a guest list.** The party should be for invited guests only. No "crashers" allowed. This will help avoid the "open party" situation.

**Set starting and ending times for the party.**

- **Set party "rules" and your expectations.** Discuss them with your teen before the party. Rules should include the following:
  - No tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.
  - No one can leave the party and then return.
  - Lights are left on at all times.
  - Certain rooms of the house are off-limits.
- **Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic beverages available.** Also, put your alcohol and any prescription or over-the-counter medicines in a locked cabinet.
- **Be there, but not too visual.** Pick somewhere close you can be called upon if needed.

## What parents need to know

**Communication and honesty are important to keep your teen safe.** Teens whose parents talk with them regularly about drugs and alcohol are less likely to use substances than those whose parents don't. Tell your teens that you expect them not to use alcohol or other drugs at parties.



Call the parent of the party host to make sure a parent will be close by the entire time.

Make sure your teen has a way to get to and from the party. Make it easy for your teen to leave a party by making it clear that they can call at any time for a lift home. Discuss why they might need to make such a call. Remind your teen NEVER to ride home with a driver who has been drinking or using other drugs. Be up to greet your teen when they come home. This can be a good way to check the time and talk about the evening.

If your teen is staying overnight at a friend's house after the party, verify this with the friend's parents and that they will be home.

