

Quick Stats, Risk Factors and Warning Signs

Teen Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Statistics:

- 20% of 8th graders and 58% of 12th graders report having been drunk at least once in their life
- During the last 30 days, 28.5% of high school students nationwide had ridden one or more times in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol
- Of illicit drug users ages 12-17: 6.8% used marijuana, 3.3% used prescription drugs, 1.2% used inhalants, 0.8% used hallucinogens, and 0.6% used cocaine (2005)
- 2/5 of 8th graders and almost 3/4 of all 10th graders consider marijuana easily accessible
- 1/2 of teens (50%) have tried an illicit drug by the time they finish high school

Risk Factors:

- Family history/Current family use
- Family conflict
- Academic difficulty
- Friends who use
- Relaxed rules and cultural norms around alcohol and other drug use
- Availability
- Early and persistent behavioral problems
- Social difficulty
- Early first use

Warning Signs of Use/Abuse:

- Drop in grades
- Emotionally erratic/short-tempered
- Loss of initiative
- Weight changes
- Coming to school high or drunk
- Switching friends
- More secretive/withdrawing from family
- Change in physical hygiene/appearance
- Problems at school
- Missing money, alcohol, or meds

Limit Setting Strategies:

- Delay, Influence, and Minimize
- Find balance between firm limits and fostering independence
- Practice and teach the art of negotiation
- Know your own limits and do not budge
- Be on the same page as your spouse/parenting partner
- Question sleepovers
- Check-in on nights out
- Communicate with other parents
- Develop an emergency plan

Communicating about Drugs:

- Initiate the conversation
- Always maintain your status as a role model
- Use media as a medium
- Talk about your feelings