



A Parent's Guide to Safe & Legal Teenage Parties

Tips for Parents:

- ✓ Include your child in the planning.
- ✓ Set the ground rules with your teen before the party. Let your teen know what you expect. Ask your teen to inform his or her friends about the rules before the party. Stress shared responsibility for hosting the party.
- ✓ Check coats and backpacks at the door.
- ✓ Be home during the party. Agree on an area of the house where guests will be comfortable and where you can supervise adequately.
- ✓ Allow no alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. (In Idaho, it is illegal for anyone under 21 to possess alcohol, for anyone under 18 to possess tobacco, and for an adult to permit alcohol or tobacco possession or consumption by anyone who is underage.) Criminal charges may be brought against the parent if a violation of law occurs.
- ✓ Immediately call the police if you suspect or find weapons. Do not attempt to handle the situation yourself.
- ✓ Limit attendance by sending invitations or making personal phone calls. Do not allow uninvited guests to crash the party. Anyone not invited should be asked to leave. If you have a problem with crashers refusing to leave, call the police.
- ✓ Set time limits for the party. Drop-in parties are hard to control.
- ✓ When a guest leaves, do not allow him or her to return. This will discourage guests from leaving the party to drink or to use other drugs elsewhere and then return.
- ✓ Notify your neighbors that there will be a party.
- ✓ Invite other parents to help chaperon.
- ✓ Encourage your teen to plan activities, music, videos, or games in advance of the party. Drinking and drug use are sometimes the result of boredom.
- ✓ Plan to quietly circulate among the guests. Do not isolate yourself.
- ✓ If you suspect that a guest has used drugs or alcohol, contact his or her parents immediately. Request that the child's parents pick up their child as soon as possible.

If Your Party Starts Getting Out of Control:

- ✓ Turn off the music.
- ✓ Announce to the guests, "This party is getting too loud; the party will not continue unless the music stays turned down."
- ✓ Emphasize that you, as an adult, are responsible for their actions and any disturbance that is caused.
- ✓ If a guest continues unruly or inappropriate behavior, request that he or she leave your party. (The majority of the time, the unruly guest is intoxicated.)
- ✓ If your guest continues the unruly behavior, contact the police department. Be prepared to give your name, your address, the number of people at the party, if people are

intoxicated, and if they are acting disorderly.

Tips for Parents of Teenagers Going to a Party:

- ✓ Call the host parents to confirm the location of the party, when it will start and end, and that the parents will be present throughout the party.
- ✓ Check to make sure it is an alcohol and other drug free party.
- ✓ Volunteer to help chaperon the party.
- ✓ Make sure that your child knows that he or she should call you for a ride home if alcohol or other drugs are present.

Young drivers are less likely than adults to drive after drinking, but their crash risk is substantially higher when they do.

This is especially true at low and moderate blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) and is thought to result from teenagers' relative inexperience with both drinking and driving. Twenty-three percent of drivers of passenger vehicles ages 16-19 who were fatally injured in 1999 crashes had high BACs (0.10 percent or more), even though every state has a legal minimum alcohol purchasing age of 21 years old.

If You Suspect Drug Use. . .

- ✓ If you are concerned that your child has been using alcohol or another drug, be open and honest about your feelings.
- ✓ It is not unusual to feel overwhelmed by confusion, guilt, anger or fear. Try not to let your feelings get in the way.
- ✓ Cool down before thinking about the best way to respond.

✓ Choose the right time:

Try to talk privately with your child during a quiet part of the day when you won't be interrupted.

✓ Focus on the behaviors:

Begin by telling your child that something is on your mind that concerns you. Mention your specific concerns (e.g. changes in behavior). Name calling, scolding, blaming and threatening can create bad feelings.

✓ Don't be afraid to set standards and follow through:

Take a firm stand regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs.

Often our children wish that we would say "NO" clearly and firmly. Set rules in your home and follow through with the consequences.

✓ For the time being, don't ask "why":

If your child admits to using drugs, it will not help to ask why. It is very possible that your child does not know; they may have many reasons.

If your child does not admit to drug use, don't push the issue for now.

By having this discussion, you have already let the child know that you are concerned and that you are willing to talk about drugs. However, you can use this time to make sure your values and the house rules are well known.

✓ Ask for help:

Don't be afraid to get outside help. There are many confidential resources available to parents. You will find places to start in this handbook.

What Can You Do If Your Son/Daughter Comes Home Drunk or Stoned?

✓ What to do That Night

DO . . .

- ✓ Try to remain cool and calm.
- ✓ Talk to them and try to find out what they have taken.
- ✓ Call a doctor or take them to the nearest hospital emergency department if they are seriously ill.
- ✓ Tell them, "We will talk about this tomorrow".
- ✓ Check them often during the night if they are in a condition to be sent to bed.

DO NOT . . .

- ✓ Shout at, accuse or hurt them in any way. All this is quite useless and harmful when they are in this condition.

✓ What to do the Next Day

DO . . .

- ✓ Talk to them immediately.
- ✓ Have them assume responsibility for their actions including clean up.
- ✓ Try to find out what happened and whom they were with.
- ✓ Let them know you will not accept their behavior and you will be watching them closely in the future.
- ✓ Set up guidelines for behavior with your child as well as curfews for going out with friends. Let them know you expect them to follow these guidelines.
- ✓ Talk with them about other activities and choices, so they can avoid taking drugs.

DO NOT . . .

- ✓ Have your discussion with them if you are too angry to talk about it without losing your temper. Wait until you can discuss it calmly. No one gains anything from angry words.
- ✓ Try to hide what happened from other family members. Everyone in the family should be aware of what is going on, especially when support and understanding can mean so much.