Prevention: What Parents Can Do

Model responsible behavior
- Examine your attitudes and substance use.
- Keep alcohol and prescription drugs locked up.
- Never give your teen (or anyone underage) alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
  - Parent's Guide to Teen Parties
  - Social hosting- know the law.

If you abuse drugs or alcohol, your kids will find out. Get help if necessary.

Monitor whereabouts, activities and friends
- Don't be afraid to ask where they’re going, who they'll be with and what they'll be doing.
- Get to know your kid's friends – and their parents.
- Monitor parties.

Be alert to high risks
- Co-occurring disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, eating disorder, conduct disorders, learning problems)
- Transitional periods can be risky (e.g., from elementary to middle school, from middle to high school and from high school to college. (CASA)
- Factors that may predict later drug use (NIDA)

Stay informed
- Learn the risk/protective factors for alcohol and drug abuse.
- Know the warning signs (see Teens at Risk).
- Be aware of the latest fads (e.g., four loco). See emerging issues.
- Use reliable sources: Evaluate web-based health resources

***Free Parenting Classes***

Active Parenting Now (parents of 5-12 yr olds) and Active Parenting Teens (parents of 13-18 yr olds) are offered for groups of 10 or more by the Hanley Center at the request of a community agency. Classes, held at the requesting agency, run once a week, two hours a session, for six consecutive weeks. Email JVenuto@hanleycenter.org  More information in Community.

Communicate openly
Teens who learn about alcohol and drugs from their parents are less likely to use them.
- Start early and talk often, in developmentally appropriate ways, about the dangers of using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Teach refusal skills.
- Be a good listener.

Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition
1112 Manatee Avenue West #504, Bradenton, FL 34205
(941) 749-3030 ext 3491 • www.drugfreemanatee.org
• Encourage questions.  
*The more you talk, the easier it will be to discuss sensitive issues.*

**Be involved**

*Teens who are close to their parents are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.*

• Establish regular “together time” doing something you both enjoy.
• Maintain Family Rituals (e.g., eating dinner together regularly).
• Involve family members, friends and neighbors in children’s lives; be sure dad is engaged.

*The more involved you are in their lives, the more valued they’ll feel.*

**Provide guidance**

*They may protest, but teens still want to know that you care enough to set limits.*

• Set rules and enforce them consistently.
• Have them check in at regular times.
• Verify adult supervision at social gatherings.

*Listen to your instincts and intervene if you feel that something is wrong.*

**Adopt an effective family management style**

*Children from families that practice effective communication, problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, and appropriate and consistent discipline, are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.*

• Reduce parent-child and marital conflict.
• Encourage your child to express feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately and to avoid using alcohol, drugs or food as an emotional outlet (i.e., to ease feelings, relieve stress or boredom, or solve other problems).
• Help your child manage stress: Do not over-schedule your child. A balance of rest and activity is essential for good health.

**Incorporate religion or spirituality into family life**

*Teens who never attend religious services are:* 

• More than twice as likely to smoke
• Twice as likely to drink
• More than three times likelier to binge drink and use marijuana
• Almost four times likelier to use other illicit drugs

*Than teens who attend religious services at least weekly. *(CASA)*

Choose a physician who screens adolescents for alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, preferably using a standard screening tool (e.g., CRAFFT).

*Parents are the most powerful influence in their teen's life.*