

Drunk Driving Prevention Guide for Teens and Parents

As teens begin to drink at younger and younger ages, many parents have become concerned about their children's risk of drinking and driving. Nearly 30 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes each day due to an alcohol-impaired driver, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vehicle accidents remain the number one killer of adolescents, and this trend continues to grow. Drinking impairs a person's ability to make crucial driving decisions. After just one drink, a driver can lose their ability to perform tasks necessary to operate a vehicle safely, such as proper braking, steering, and changing lanes. Alcohol can also cloud a drinker's judgment, increasing the driver's risk of making bad choices on the road. If caught, a person found driving after drinking can be charged with DUI or DWI. DUI is short for driving under the influence; DWI is short for driving while intoxicated. If you drink and drive, you can lose your license, may be charged hefty fines, and could even go to jail. Follow these drunk-driving prevention tips to stay safe and sober on the road.

For teens and young adults:

- Organize carpools or limousines on prom night and during other group events to avoid having to drive.
- If you plan to drink, choose a responsible designated driver before going out.
- Always buckle up when driving - it's your best defense against an impaired driver.
- Take mass transit or a taxi or ask a sober friend to drive you home if you've been drinking.
- Ask your school to host alcohol-free parties after prom and graduation.

- When you become old enough to purchase wine, liquor or beer, do not buy it for underage people.
- Just say "no" to friends who urge you to drink and drive or to get into a vehicle with an impaired driver.
- Talk to someone who you know has been involved in a drunk driving accident.
- Offer to pay for cab fare or a bus ticket for others to get home.
- Drink responsibly and moderately. Drinking too much can greatly impair your judgment, distort your hearing and vision, and cause a slew of symptoms.
- If you plan to drink, tell a friend you trust to hide your keys.
- The simplest way to avoid drunk-driving incidents is to stay away from alcoholic beverages. Grab a soda, seltzer, or coffee instead, or simply say, "no, thank you."

For parents and guardians:

- Never condone underage drinking, and never serve alcohol to minors.
- Set a curfew for your child, and always wait up for your teen to come home.
- Know the details of where your child is going, what transportation they are using to get to and from the destination, and when they will get back.
- Tell your teen that you will pick them up if they don't have a ride.
- Never allow your child to see you drink and drive, as they may mimic your actions.
- Teach your teen to be a safe passenger and to never ride with anyone who has been drinking.

- Educate your child about the consequences of drunk driving, not only for themselves but for others on the road.
- Be a "hands on" parent and establish clear expectations, including absolutely no underage drinking.
- Form an alliance with other parents to help prevent unsupervised parties.
- Don't make liquor available in the home. If you have alcohol in the home, make sure it's under lock and key.
- Create a safety net for special occasions, such as prom. Volunteer to give your child and their friends a ride or rent a limousine for the night.

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