

Parents--Talk With Your Grads About Celebrating Safely

BETHESDA, Md., June 2, 2015 /PRNewswire/ --

Graduation...

Graduation is a time to celebrate. But before your high school seniors begin their parties, take the time to talk with them about keeping events alcohol-free—it just may save a life.

It's About Your Teen...

A teenager's brain is still developing, and it is very sensitive to alcohol's effects on judgment and decision-making. Tragedies can—and do—happen, so underage drinking should not be a part of any end-of-year celebration.

The Effects of Alcohol Can Be Deceptive...

If you are asked to explain the reasons behind your rules, you can describe the effects of alcohol on the human body:

When people drink alcohol, they may temporarily feel elated and happy, but they should not be fooled. As blood alcohol content rises, the effects on the body—and the potential risks—multiply.

- Inhibitions and memory become affected, so people may say and do things that they will regret later and possibly not remember doing at all.
- Decision-making skills are affected. When they drink, some people may become restless and aggressive. They may be at greater risk for having an alcohol-related traffic crash, getting into fights, or making unwise decisions about sex.
- Coordination and physical control are also impacted. When drinking leads to loss of balance, slurred speech, and blurred vision, even normal activities can become more dangerous.
- Consuming too much alcohol can also lead to death. If people drink too much, they will eventually get sleepy and pass out. Reflexes like gagging and breathing can be suppressed. That means they could vomit and choke, or just stop breathing completely.

Think About It!

Drinking to celebrate graduation can result in vandalism, arrests, sexual assaults, trips to the emergency room, alcohol-related traffic crashes, and worse. Drinking by children can put themselves and their friends in real danger. Ask them to consider this question: Is that any way to celebrate?

Talking With Your Graduate...

It is critical to talk with your graduate because research shows that parents do make a difference. By serving as positive role models, talking to other parents and your teens, supervising parties to make sure no alcohol is served, and supporting alcohol-free school celebrations, you can help prevent a life-changing mistake.

A Word About Alcohol Poisoning

Thousands of students are transported to the emergency room each year for alcohol poisoning, which occurs when high levels of alcohol suppress the nervous and respiratory systems. Signs of this dangerous condition can include:

- Slow or irregular breathing
- Vomiting
- Mental confusion, stupor, loss of consciousness, or coma
- Hypothermia or low body temperature, bluish or pale skin

Alcohol poisoning can lead to permanent brain damage or death, so a person showing any of these signs requires immediate medical attention. If you or your graduates notice any of these signs, don't wait. Call 911 if you suspect alcohol poisoning.

Remember...

Tell your graduate to play it safe and party right—and alcohol-free—at graduation. Because a well-deserved celebration shouldn't end in tragedy.


For more information, visit www.collegedrinkprevention.gov.

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SOURCE National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health

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