



## august

Talk (and Listen) to Your Kids  
**Table Talks**  
YOU are the Most Important  
Influence in their Lives!  
Drugs • Risky Behavior • Teen Pressures

Statistics show that Parents and Guardians talking with (and listening to) their child increases the rate of them making healthy positive choices.

To learn more on how to talk with your child, please go to <http://www.steered-straight.org/table-talks-campaign>. There you will find a downloadable *Table Talks* pdf that will help you continue the conversation on a weekly basis.

Now is the perfect time to begin a conversation with your teen, please reach out to Steered Straight if you have any questions.

### Back to the Classroom

Transitioning teens back to the flow of school is never an easy task. Some teens ready on their own, and others need help with the transition.

- Discuss with your teen about how he/she feels about going back to school.
- Ask your teen if they are ready to go back to school.

We all make New Year's Resolutions. Why not set goals and intentions for the new school year? Asking your kids questions like the following will help get them out of autopilot and into feeling empowered about school.

- What did you like about the previous school year?
- What didn't work for you?
- What would you like to see change?
- What are your goals for the upcoming year?
- What do you want to accomplish?

A brainstorming session around the dinner table (mom and dad can set intentions too!) followed by more formal goal-setting in a journal is a great way to avoid getting swallowed up whole by busy schedules, homework, and after school activities and gets kids to plan how they intend to achieve their goals.

For more information:

<http://mindfulcharity.ca/back-to-school/>



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### Open Communications with Your Teen

Keeping the doors of communication open with an adolescent is tricky for most parents. This transitional time between childhood and adulthood tends to place barriers between generations. Among other things, parents must set limits, request information, and supervise activities. Our intention is to guide and stay informed. Yet, often the effect upon our teen is that they feel policed and intruded upon (Richfield).

- Discuss with your teen how you are there for him/her.
- Discuss with your teen how communication is important.

**Control your own reactions to unwelcome news.** The quickest way to shut down communication channels with a teenager is to become harsh, blaming, and close-minded. Once we adopt an adversarial stance we trigger the same in our teen. Remind yourself that to stay connected we must ensure that they view us as on their side even when we disapprove or feel disappointed in them. To protect the bond, position yourself as a coach who reviews events, identify problems, and discusses strategies to prevent future trouble.

**Use bridge-building language.** Teens are extremely sensitive to being lectured and “talk-ed-down-to.” Once they feel demeaned they may strike back with words that turn discussions into verbal battlefields. Parents can help keep communication free of conflict by using non-judgmental and bridge-building language. Expressions such as “let’s try to figure out why this happened” or “maybe you have some ideas about how to solve this one” support the teen’s self-esteem and communicate a parent’s respect for their perspective. Parents are wise to avoid the typical traps that erode communication: jumping to conclusions, dragging up past problems, and predicting future mistakes.

**Take advantage of connecting opportunities.** As much as teens crave their privacy they remain dependent upon us for many wants and needs, including our approval and involvement. Pathways for connecting often present themselves to parents who keep their eyes and ears open to these opportunities. The currents of teenage life, such as peculiar music, racy television shows, and suggestive humor, are often staring us in the face. Next time, consider taking some time to stop, look, listen, and yes, even enjoy.

**Pay careful attention to timing.** Teens may be moody and sometimes unpredictable, but observant parents can determine when it’s best to introduce difficult issues for discussion. In many cases, timing is everything. Try to pick up on the signals suggesting that the doors to interaction are open or closed, such as their expression, tone of voice, and the present circumstances. If you’re not sure, ask. Questions such as, “Is this a good time to talk about...?” communicates your understanding of their feelings and preferences. The result may be a more open and productive dialogue.

For more information:

<http://healthyplace.com/parenting/the-parent-coach/how-parents-can-improve-communication-with-teenagers/>

[www.steeredstraight.org](http://www.steeredstraight.org) • (phone) 856.691.6676 • (email) [info@steeredstraight.com](mailto:info@steeredstraight.com)



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### Get Involved in Your Teen's Life

It has been shown many times over in research studies that **a parent who is involved in their child's education has a positive impact**. It's reflected in improved grades and test scores, strong attendance, a higher rate of homework completion, higher graduation rates, improved attitudes and behaviors in the child, as well as the child being more likely to become involved in positive extra-curricular activities.

Send out the message early in your child's education that your home is an involved and active supporter of their learning (Robert Myers, PhD, 2014).

- Help your teen with their homework.
- Find an activity to do as a family, ask your teen's opinion.

For more information:

<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/homework-help/the-positive-influence-of-being-involved-in-your-childs-education/>



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### Get to Know Your Teen's Goals

Some of the most successful people have figured out that setting and reaching professional, personal or educational goals is the key to establishing what's important in life and actually getting it.

Setting goals with teens requires them to adopt certain characteristics that will translate well in the adult world. Some of these characteristics include motivation, commitment, determination, enthusiasm, and how to deal with frustration and discouragement.

Setting and reaching goals are valuable life lessons that your teen can learn when it comes to decision making and problem solving (Setting Goals With Teens, 2014).

- Talk to your teen about what they want to be when they grow up.
- Talk to your teen about what it takes to achieve their goals.

For more information:

<http://helpyourteennow.com/setting-goals-with-teens/>



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## Helping Your Teen Cope with Experiences

Just as one object can give rise to multiple percepts, so an object may fail to give rise to any percept at all: if the percept has no grounding in a person's experience, the person may literally not perceive it.

The processes of perception routinely alter what humans see. When people view something with a preconceived concept about it, they tend to take those concepts and see them whether or not they are there. This problem stems from the fact that humans are unable to understand new information, without the inherent bias of their previous knowledge.

A person's knowledge creates his or her reality as much as the truth, because the human mind can only contemplate that to which it has been exposed. When objects are viewed without understanding, the mind will try to reach for something that it already recognizes, in order to process what it is viewing. That which most closely relates to the unfamiliar from our past experiences, makes up what we see when we look at things that we don't comprehend. Clearly our culture plays a part here, as does our past history and experience with others (Perception Checking).

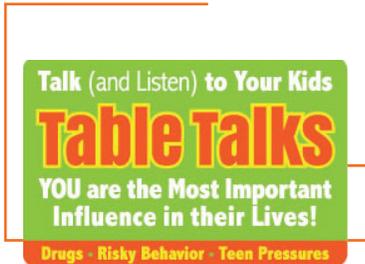
- Discuss with your teen experiences that have left a lasting feeling.
- Discuss with your teens ways to cope with these feelings.

For more information:

[http://www.creducation.org/resources/perception\\_checking/influences\\_on\\_perception.html](http://www.creducation.org/resources/perception_checking/influences_on_perception.html)



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### Thousands of Teens Commit Suicide each Year in the United States

In fact, suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds (Teen Suicide Statistics).

#### Practice self-esteem boosters with your teen:

- Set Boundaries and Expect Them to Follow Rules
- Be Generous With Praise
- Encourage Decision-Making and Opinions
- Stay Connected With All Forms of Communication
- Be Supportive During a Conflict
- Criticize Constructively
- Encourage Their Individual Talents

#### Top 10 Reasons Teenagers Commit Suicide

- Bullying and Peer Pressure
- Mental Disorders
- Sexual Orientation
- Domestic Abuse
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Divorce
- Emotional Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Cyber Bullying
- Stress

#### Be aware of the risks.

For more information:

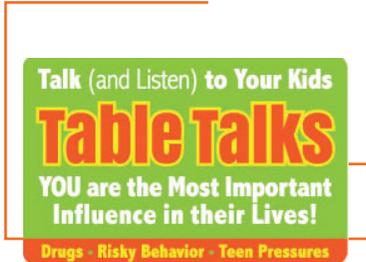
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Teen-Suicide-Statistics.aspx>

<http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/parenting/tweens-teens/7-ways-to-help-build-your-teens-self-esteem>

<http://listcrux.co/top-10-reasons-teenagers-commit-suicide/>



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### The Importance of Obtaining a High School Diploma

Statistics show that more than 60% of job opportunities in the skilled labor force require a high school diploma. Receiving a high school diploma enables someone to pursue a higher education, albeit it vocational school, trade programs, a certified work-program and/or college.

A high school diploma is simply the doorway to even more available long-term career opportunities and enables students to take a number of interesting vocational and elective courses, allowing him/her to decide what type of studies and/or future career may be of interest.

A high school diploma typically allows graduates to enter the workforce in positions that are more than simply entry-level, but also offer higher-paying opportunities. Obtaining a high school diploma shows employers that most graduates have deductive-reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Studies show that students who graduate from high school feel more confident in pursuing a career and are proud of their achievements.

When someone graduates from high school there is a sense of finality and accomplishment that accompanies it. All the years of studying, test taking and working towards a goal to ensure a successful future culminate in an achievement that is celebrated. High school graduates are positive role models! Whether someone wants to be a positive role model for society in general, his or her younger siblings and younger cousins or a child, obtaining a high school diploma is an honored achievement

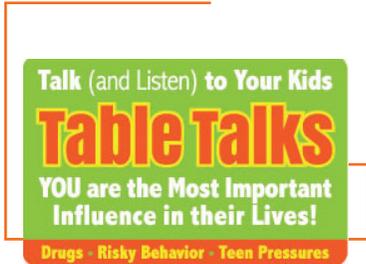
- Discuss with your teen his/her plans for the future.
- Help your teen set goals.

For more information:

[http://www.theamericanacademy.com/blog/why\\_a\\_high\\_school\\_diploma\\_is\\_important](http://www.theamericanacademy.com/blog/why_a_high_school_diploma_is_important)



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## Red Ribbon Week Awareness

80 million people participate in Red Ribbon events each year. The National Family Partnership organized the first Nationwide Red Ribbon Campaign. NFP provides drug awareness by sponsoring the annual National Red Ribbon Campaign™.

Since its beginning in 1985, the Red Ribbon has touched the lives of millions of people around the world. In response to the murder of DEA Agent Enrique Camarena, angered parents and youth in communities across the country began wearing Red Ribbons as a symbol of their commitment to raise awareness of the killing and destruction cause by drugs in America (About Us).

- Ask your teen if they know about Red Ribbon Week.
- Discuss with your teen what their school does to support Red Ribbon Week.
- Ask your teen what they could do to support Red Ribbon Week.

Resource: <http://redribbon.org/about/>



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### Teens and Bullying

Many parents don't think that bullying is as big a problem as bringing a weapon to school or drug use but its effects can be severe and long lasting. Every day, nearly 160,000 children miss school because they are scared of bullying, according to the National Education Association. Bullying doesn't only negatively affect its victims, but also the bullies themselves (What Parents Can Do).

- Discuss with your teen how bullying affects both the bully and the person being bullied.
- Discuss with your teen if there is bullying going on in his/her school.

Kids who are bullied are more likely to:

- Do poorly in school
- Have low self-esteem
- Be depressed
- Turn to violent behavior to protect themselves or get revenge on their bullies.

Kids who bully are more likely to:

- Do poorly in school
- Smoke or drink alcohol
- Commit crimes in the future

Parents can play a central role to preventing bullying and stopping it when it happens.

- Teach kids to solve problems without using violence and praise them when they do.
- Give children positive feedback when they behave well to help them build self-esteem. Help give them the self-confidence to stand up for what they believe in.
- Ask your children about their day and listen to them talk about school, social events, their classmates, and any problems they have.
- Take bullying seriously. Many kids are embarrassed to say they have been bullied. You may only have one chance to step in and help.
- If you see any bullying, stop it right away, even if your child is the one doing the bullying.
- Encourage your child to help others who need it.
- Don't bully your children or bully others in front of them. Many times kids who are bullied at home react by bullying other kids. If your children see you hit, ridicule, or gossip about someone else, they are also more likely to do so themselves.
- Support bully prevention programs in your child's school. If your school doesn't have one, consider starting one with other parents, teachers, and concerned adults.

For more information:

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying/what-parents-can-do>



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### Your Teen and Cyber Bullying

Despite the potential damage of cyber bullying, it is alarmingly common among adolescents and teens. According to cyber bullying statistics from the i-SAFE foundation:

- Over half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyber bullying.
  - More than 1 in 3 young people have experienced cyber threats online.
  - Over 25 percent of adolescents and teens have been bullied repeatedly through their cell phones or the Internet.
  - Well over half of young people do not tell their parents when cyber bullying occurs (Cyber Bullying Statistics).
- Discuss with your teen that cyber bullying is real.
  - Discuss with your teen that results from any kind of bullying is the same.

Cyber bullying affects many adolescents and teens on a daily basis. Cyber bullying involves using technology, like cell phones and the Internet, to bully or harass another person. Cyber bullying can take many forms:

- Sending mean messages or threats to a person's email account or cell phone.
- Spreading rumors online or through texts.
- Posting hurtful or threatening messages on social networking sites or web pages.
- Stealing a person's account information to break into their account and send damaging messages
- Pretending to be someone else online to hurt another person
- Taking unflattering pictures of a person and spreading them through cell phones or the Internet
- Sexting, or circulating sexually suggestive pictures or messages about a person.

Cyber bullying can be very damaging to adolescents and teens. It can lead to anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Also, once things are circulated on the Internet, they may never disappear, resurfacing at later times to renew the pain of cyber bullying.

For more information:

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/cyber-bullying-statistics.html>



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## Being Bullied

There are many things you can do if you're being bullied. Different strategies can work in different situations. You can try and work it out by yourself. But if the bullying doesn't stop, you might find it helpful to ask someone else for advice. Don't be afraid to let someone know that you are being bullied—other people can be a great help.

If you are being bullied at school, find a trusted teacher (or past teacher), school psychologist, guidance counselor, or administrator with whom you can speak. If you are being bullied at work, seek out a supervisor or a human resources manager (What to do if You Are Being Bullied).

- Discuss with your teen what he/she can do if they are being bullied.
- Discuss and prepare a plan of action to take in case this happens.

To stop bullying—whether verbal, written or cyber bullying — it can be helpful to tell someone that you are being bullied. This can seem scary at first, but telling someone can lighten your load and help you to work out how to solve the problem.

Talking to someone is particularly important if you feel unsafe or frightened, or if you don't have many friends. Asking for help or talking to someone about your situation is not being weak or "giving in." In fact, telling someone can take a lot of strength and courage.

For more information:

<http://us.reachout.com/facts/factsheet/what-to-do-if-you-are-being-bullied>



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## Helping Someone Being Bullied

People who are being bullied can feel really distressed and it can have a serious impact on their life and health. In very serious cases bullying could lead to self-harming, or even suicidal thoughts. Often other people at school don't realize the effect that bullying has when it goes on day in day out (How to help someone being bullied).

- Discuss with your teen ways he/she can help someone who is being bullied.
- Discuss with your teen how being bullied could negatively affect someone's life.

What should your teen do to help someone being bullied:

- Tell a teacher.
- Go with the person being bullied and back up what they say to the teacher.
- Tell the person being bullied that you will help them tell their parents.
- Tell your parents what's happening and ask them to have a quiet word with your head of year.
- Agree with your friends that you will all make it clear to the person doing the bullying that you don't like what they're doing.
- Keep a diary of what you see going on so that you can give a teacher a reliable account of what has been happening.

If a teacher is told what has happened then the bully shouldn't find out that who has told them. The teacher should be able to quietly alert other teachers and keep an eye on the situation so that the bully is caught red handed and has only themselves to blame.

For more information:

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/how-to-help-someone-being-bullied/>



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### Be Aware of the Dangers of Mischief Night

Mischief Night has been tradition for many years. It is a rite of passage for teens, and should be thoroughly enjoyed. As long as Halloween pranks remain silly and harmless, teens are unlikely to get into serious trouble. Feel free to wreak havoc on Mischief Night, just do it safely and with style (How to Wreak Havoc on Mischief Night).

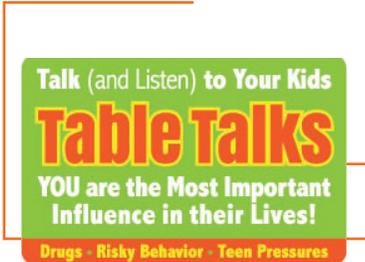
- Talk to your teen about the dangers of mischief night.
- Talk with your teen about alternate plans for a safer night.
- Make your teen aware of what not to do.

For more information:

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2067536\\_wreak-havoc-mischief-night.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2067536_wreak-havoc-mischief-night.html)



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## Teens and Smoking

If smoking continues at the current rate among youth in this country, 5.6 million of today's Americans, younger than 18, will die early from a smoking-related illness. That's about 1 of every 13 Americans aged 17 years or younger alive today (Youth and Tobacco Use).

- Discuss with your teen about the many harms of tobacco.
- Discuss with your teen about the how addictive tobacco can be.

### Tobacco Use\* Among High School Students in 2015

Tobacco Product	Overall	Females	Males
Any tobacco product†	25.3%	20.3%	30.0%
Electronic cigarettes	16.0%	12.8%	19.0%
Cigarettes	9.3%	7.7%	10.7%
Cigars	8.6%	5.6%	11.5%
Hookahs	7.2%	6.9%	7.4%
Smokeless tobacco	6.0%	1.8%	10.0%
Pipes	1.0%	0.7%	1.4%
Bidis	0.6%	0.4%	0.9%

### Tobacco Use\* Among Middle School Students in 2015

Tobacco Product	Overall	Females	Males
Any tobacco product†	7.4%	6.4%	8.3%
Electronic cigarettes	5.3%	4.8%	5.9%
Cigarettes	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%
Hookahs	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%
Smokeless tobacco	1.8%	1.1%	-\$
Cigars	1.6%	1.4%	1.8%
Pipes	0.4%	-	-
Bidis	0.2%	-	-

For more information:

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm)



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## Dangers of Vaping

Experts are warning parents of a new, dangerous way for teenagers to get drunk and fast. It's a dangerous new high that's getting teens drunker, faster and the consequences could be deadly. The new underage drinking trend putting teens at risk is called "vaping" which is not to be confused with a smokeless cigarette (The Dangers Of Teens 'Vaping' Alcohol, 2014).

Because e-cigarettes are such a new trend, health experts have been scrambling to prove that e-cigarettes are a gateway to nicotine addiction. Results of a new study released in March confirmed our worst fears: Adolescents who smoke e-cigarettes were more likely to smoke regular cigarettes and less likely to quit smoking. In a few short years, these unregulated products have opened up a brand new path to nicotine addiction (Licciardi, 2014).

- Talk to your teen about the dangers of vaping.
- Talk to your teen about the risks of vaping alcohol and drugs.

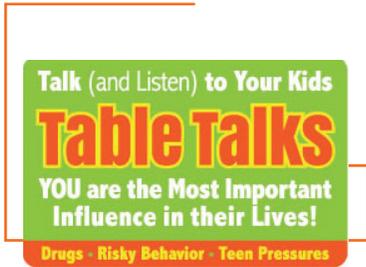
For more information:

<http://miami.cbslocal.com/2014/05/21/the-dangers-of-teens-vaping-alcohol/>

<https://www.teenlife.com/blogs/your-teen-vaping-dangers-e-cigarettes>



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### Know the Dangers Associated with Drinking and Driving

#### Over 40% of all 10th Graders drink alcohol.

Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2015). *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2014: Volume I, Secondary school students*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan, 599 pp.

#### Kids who start drinking young are seven more times more likely to be in an alcohol-related crash.

Hingson, Ralph, et al. "Age of Drinking Onset, Driving After Drinking, and Involvement in Alcohol-Related Motor Vehicle Crashes." DOT HS 809 188. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, January 2001.

#### High school students who use alcohol or other substances are five times more likely to drop out of school.

National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Volume 1: Secondary School Students", *National Survey Results on Drug Use from The Monitoring the Future Study, 1975-1997*. Rockville, MD: Department of Health and Human Services, 1998.

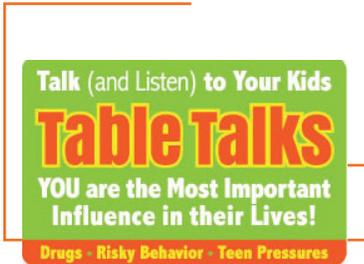
- Discuss the dangers of drinking and driving, also the dangers of riding in the car with someone who is drinking.
- Discuss how drinking and driving could potentially destroy their goals in life.

For more information:

<http://www.madd.org/statistics/?referrer=https://search.yahoo.com/>



## november



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### Keeping Your Kids Away From Alcohol

68 percent of all 12th graders have tried alcohol at some point according to the latest statistics, so it is clear that most teens still see drinking as a legitimate source of entertainment and a meaningful rite of passage into adulthood (How To Keep Your Kids Away From Alcohol On Labor Day - TeenDrugRehabs).

- Talk to your teen about how to stay safe during Labor Day.
- Discuss safer options to celebrate the holidays.
- Know where your child is and who they are with.
- Explain to your teen your reasons for wanting to know their whereabouts.

For more information:

<http://www.teendrugrehabs.com/blog/keep-kids-away-alcohol-labor-day>



november

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## Knowing the Facts About Alcohol

Just about everyone knows that the legal drinking age throughout the United States is 21. But according to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, almost 80% of high school students have tried alcohol (For Teens).

- Ask your teen if they know the dangers of alcohol on their developing brain.
- After you explain the real dangers, ask them if they are willing to take that chance.

Alcohol affects an adolescent's brain development in many ways. The effects of underage drinking on specific brain activities are explained below. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. Alcohol can appear to be a stimulant because, initially, it depresses the part of the brain that controls inhibitions.

**CEREBRAL CORTEX**—Alcohol slows down the cerebral cortex as it works with information from a person's senses.

**CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM**—When a person thinks of something he wants his body to do, the central nervous system—the brain and the spinal cord—sends a signal to that part of the body. Alcohol slows down the central nervous system, making the person think, speak, and move slower.

**FRONTAL LOBES**—The brain's frontal lobes are important for planning, forming ideas, making decisions, and using self-control. When alcohol affects the frontal lobes of the brain, a person may find it hard to control his or her emotions and urges. The person may act without thinking or may even become violent. Drinking alcohol over a long period of time can damage the frontal lobes forever.

**HIPPOCAMPUS**—The hippocampus is the part of the brain where memories are made. When alcohol reaches the hippocampus, a person may have trouble remembering something he or she just learned and can happen after just one or two drinks. Drinking a lot of alcohol quickly can cause a blackout—not being able to remember entire events. If alcohol damages the hippocampus, a person may find it hard to learn and to hold on to knowledge.

**CEREBELLUM**—The cerebellum is important for coordination, thoughts, and awareness. A person may have trouble with these skills when alcohol enters the cerebellum. After drinking alcohol, a person's hands may be so shaky that they can't touch or grab things normally, and they may lose their balance and fall.

**HYPOTHALAMUS**—The hypothalamus is a small part of the brain that does an amazing number of the body's housekeeping chores. Alcohol upsets the work of the hypothalamus. After a person drinks alcohol, blood pressure, hunger, thirst, and the urge to urinate increase while body temperature and heart rate decrease.

**MEDULLA**—The medulla controls the body's automatic actions, such as a person's heartbeat. It also keeps the body at the right temperature. Alcohol actually chills the body. Drinking a lot of alcohol outdoors in cold weather can cause a person's body temperature to fall below normal. This dangerous condition is called hypothermia.

For more information:

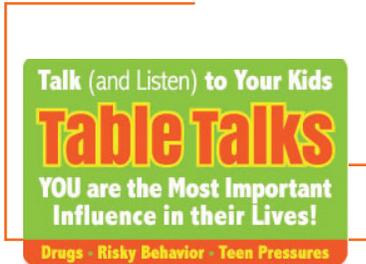
<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/alcohol.html>

<http://www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov/families/facts/brain.aspx>

[www.steeredstraight.org](http://www.steeredstraight.org) • (phone) 856.691.6676 • (email) [info@steeredstraight.com](mailto:info@steeredstraight.com)



## november



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## The Great American Smokeout

**5.6 million of today's Americans younger than 18 will die early from a smoking-related illness.**

The Great American Smokeout is an event created by the American Cancer Society that took place for the first time in California on November 18, 1976. In 1977, the American Cancer Society took the event nationwide and since then it has helped millions of smokers to quit for good, and has helped save many lives. It takes place on **the third Thursday in November each year** (Savastio, 2014).

- Discuss with your teen the purpose of Great American Smoke out Day.
- Ask your teen if he/she thinks this is a good idea, and why.

For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/GreatAmericanSmokeout/index.html>

<http://guardianlv.com/2014/11/great-american-smokeout-history-and-purpose/>



## december

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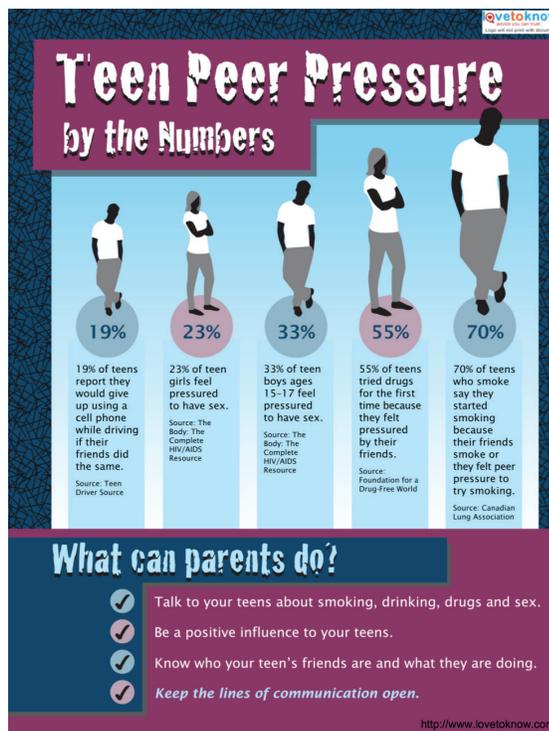
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## Peer-to-Peer Study Findings

- Teens with friends who do drugs and drink alcohol are more likely to do the same.
- Teens who do drugs and drink alcohol are more likely to convince their friends to do it too.
- Teens who do drugs and drink alcohol are more likely to seek out other teens who do the same (Zeiger).



- Know your child's friends.
- Talk to your teen about peer pressure.

For more information:

[http://teens.loveto-know.com/Statistics\\_on\\_Peer\\_Pressure](http://teens.loveto-know.com/Statistics_on_Peer_Pressure)



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### Teach Your Teen Values

Most parents recognize the need for their children to have right values. But how do you teach them? Here are practical pointers parents can use to instill those standards (Sweat, 2008).

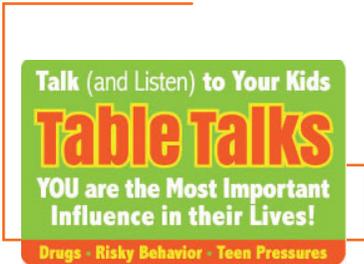
- Model good values
- Apologize to your children when you make mistakes
- Use everyday experiences as a springboard for conversation
- Share your personal experiences
- Hold your children accountable for their mistakes
- Don't let your children take the easy way out of challenges
- Involve your children in encouraging and helping others
- Applaud good behavior

For more information:

<https://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/10-practical-ways-to-teach-your-children-right-values>



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### Teach your Teen How to Handle Peer Pressure

At some point, everyone has the desire to fit into a group. If your teen is interested in sports, they might hang out with the “jocks.” If they are interested in music, they spend time with others who enjoy music. Your teen belongs to that group and feels secure when a part of it. The group identifies who they are and what they are about.

But what if people in “their group” starts doing things that are wrong, hurtful, or even illegal? And what if these same people are your teen’s friends?

This is what we refer to as peer pressure — the pressure to conform to the behaviors, attitudes, and personal habits of “the group.” In many cases, there are serious risks involved.

- Talk to your teen about how he/she would react to a situation.
- Talk to your teen about alternative ways to respond to peer pressure.

For more information:

<http://teens.webmd.com/peer-pressure>



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### New Year's Eve Awareness

"New Year's Eve is a time to celebrate both the past year and the possibilities of the year to come, yet far too often poor decisions by teens result in tragic injuries and deaths," said Stephen Wallace, senior adviser for policy, research and education at SADD. "To avoid a fatal start to the new year, teen passengers need to use their voices if they have concerns about their friends' behaviors. They will be heard."

Talk early and often. Underage drinking is prevalent everywhere. According to National Institutes of Health (NIH), 40 percent of kids have tried alcohol by the time they've reached eighth grade. Talk early and often about the dangers of drinking.

Visit [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov) to get the facts you need and create a personalized action plan for talking about alcohol to your kids (Ellis, 2012).

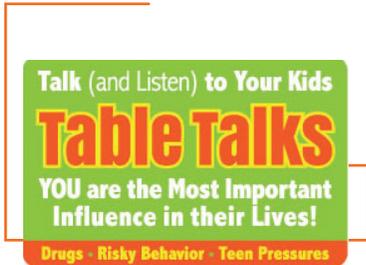
- Discuss with your teen the dangers on the road during New Year's Eve.
- Make sure that your teen is aware of the risks involved with going out that night.

For more information:

<http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/851489/how-to-keep-teens-safe-on-new-years-eve>



## January



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### News Years Resolution Statistics Data

- 45% Percent of Americans who usually make New Year's Resolutions
- 17% Percent of Americans who infrequently make New Year's Resolutions
- 38% Percent of Americans who absolutely never make New Year's Resolutions
- 8% Percent of people who are successful in achieving their resolution
- 49% Percent who have infrequent success
- 24% Percent who never succeed and fail on their resolution each year

People who explicitly make resolutions are 10 times more likely to attain their goals than people who don't explicitly make resolutions.

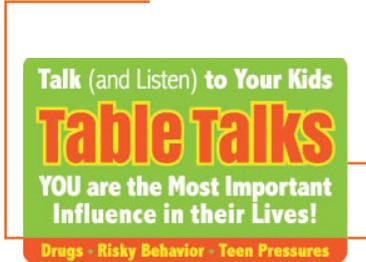
- Discuss the importance of setting and reaching goals with your teen.
- Help your teen set reachable goals.

### Here are some useful tips that would surely help you teach your teens to effectively set their goals:

- Explain to the teen why goals, be it for the short term or the long term, are very crucial and important. Sometimes, teens would not understand why they would have to set goals when there is no guarantee that these goals will ever be achieved.
- Teach the teen to clearly identify his or her goals. Let your teen define his or her own goals. They should be based on their interests, likes, ambition, knowledge, skill and talent. Because the teens are basically in the age of confusion, wisdom and practical advice from elders and guardians would really be helpful and insightful.
- Make sure to direct them on where to start their goals. The time frame, or the when, of the process should also be suggested. By doing so, the teen would have the clear idea and concept of where he/she would begin to start working toward the achievement of their goals, and how to go about acting on them. Often, important goals in life ought to be started immediately.
- Suggest some step-by-step procedures or processes on how the set goals can be achieved. Of course, the teen would eventually figure out the measures he must take to know the techniques, but you have to still suggest specific and vivid suggestions on how to effectively accomplish the goals.



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## News Years Resolution Statistics Data continued

### Useful tips that would surely help you teach your teens to effectively set their goals...continued:

Remember that as an older person, you are far more knowledgeable and experienced when it comes to the matter of life, so imparting a little knowledge and wisdom would be a welcome note on the part of the teen.

- Orient the teen on how to overcome obstacles and effectively deal with several temporary defeats that are inevitable and are on their way. Teach the teen the value of reverting back and determination in the backdrop of little failures and missed goals. Some wise words and advice would convey the idea.
- Relay several anecdotes or personal experiences about your own goal setting experiences. The personal touch is always the best, and for sure, your teenage son or daughter would learn a lot from your own major goal failures and aborted attempts.

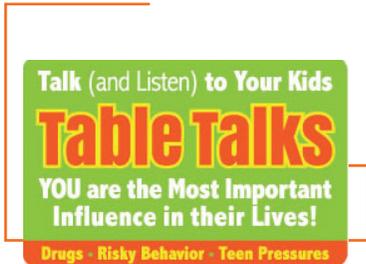
For more information:

<http://www.statisticbrain.com/new-years-resolution-statistics/>

<http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/teenage-goal-setting-preparing-for-your-future>



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## The Myths of Addiction

Your teen is in the developing stage, and it is very easy for them to believe whatever they hear. Explaining the myths of drug addiction thoroughly could open their eyes to a whole new view.

- Ask your teen what they know about drugs to be true
- Discuss with them what are the myths and what are the facts.

### Five myths about drug abuse and addiction:

**MYTH 1: Overcoming addiction is simply a matter of willpower.** You can stop using drugs if you really want to. Prolonged exposure to drugs alters the brain in ways that result in powerful cravings and a compulsion to use. These brain changes make it extremely difficult to quit by sheer force of will.

**MYTH 2: Addiction is a disease; there's nothing that can be done about it.** Most experts agree that addiction is a disease that affects the brain, but that doesn't mean anyone is a helpless victim. The brain changes associated with addiction can be treated and reversed through therapy, medication, exercise, and other treatments.

**MYTH 3: Addicts have to hit rock bottom before they can get better.** Recovery can begin at any point in the addiction process—and the earlier, the better. The longer drug abuse continues, the stronger the addiction becomes and the harder it is to treat. Don't wait to intervene until the addict has lost everything.

**MYTH 4: You can't force someone into treatment; they have to want help.** Treatment doesn't have to be voluntary to be successful. People who are pressured into treatment by their family, employer, or the legal system are just as likely to benefit as those who choose to enter treatment on their own. As they sober up and their thinking clears, many formerly resistant addicts decide they want to change.

**MYTH 5: Treatment didn't work before, so there's no point trying again.** Recovery from drug addiction is a long process that often involves setbacks. Relapse doesn't mean that treatment has failed or that sobriety is a lost cause. Rather, it's a signal to get back on track, either by going back to treatment or adjusting the treatment approach.

For more information:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm>



## january

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## Be Thorough in Explaining Addiction

People experiment with drugs for many different reasons. Many first try drugs out of curiosity, to have a good time, because friends are doing it, in an effort to improve athletic performance or ease another problem, such as stress, anxiety, or depression. Use doesn't automatically lead to abuse, and there is no specific point at which drug use moves from casual to problematic.

Drug abuse and addiction is less about the amount of substance consumed or the frequency, and more about the reasons people turn to drugs in the first place as well as the consequences of their drug use. If your drug use is causing problems in your life—at work, school, home, or in your relationships—you likely have a drug abuse or addiction problem (Drug Abuse and Addiction).

- Discuss with your teen the things that could put them at greater risk for addiction.
- Discuss with your teen that when they experiment with drugs at a young age, it increases their risk for addiction.

Why do some drug users become addicted, while others don't? As with many other conditions and diseases, vulnerability to addiction differs from person to person. Your genes, mental health, family and social environment all play a role in addiction.

Risk factors that increase your vulnerability include:

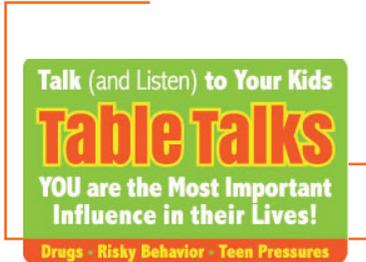
- Family history of addiction
- Abuse, neglect, or other traumatic experiences
- Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety
- Early use of drugs
- Method of administration—smoking or injecting a drug may increase its addictive potential

For more information:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm>



## January



### Death Related to Drug Abuse

Illegal drugs — such as heroin, marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine — inflict serious damage upon America and its citizens every year. Accidents, crime, domestic violence, illness, lost opportunity, and reduced productivity are the direct consequences of substance abuse. Drug and alcohol use by children often is associated with other forms of unhealthy, unproductive behavior, including delinquency and high-risk sexual activity (II. America’s Drug Use Profile).

- Talk to your teen about the risks involved using drugs.
- Talk to your teen about the physical, mental, emotional and criminal consequences of addiction.

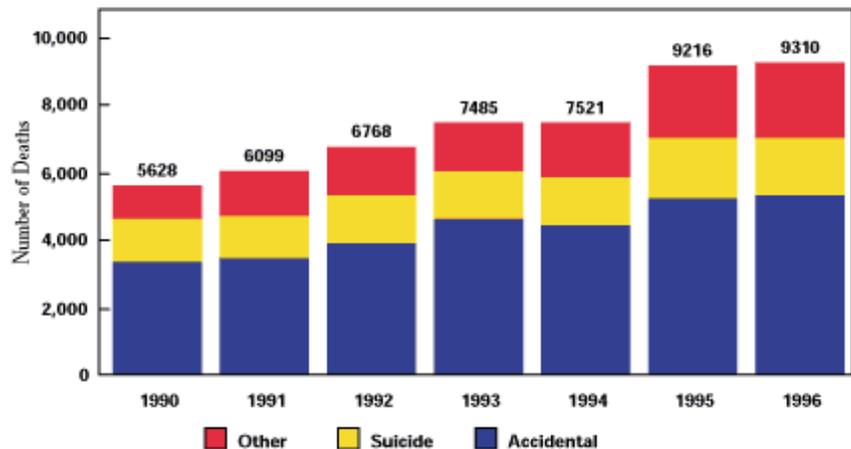
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### Drug-Related Deaths are Rising

*DAWN Medical Examiner Data*



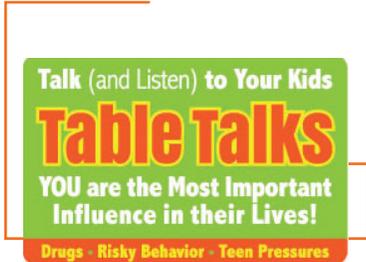
Source: HHS Drug Abuse Warning Network

For more information:

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/ondcppubs/publications/policy/99ndcs/ii-b.html>



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## The Results of Drug Abuse on the Brain

In the United States, an estimated 67% of people aged 12 and older consumed alcohol in 2014, while about 6.4% of people met the criteria for alcoholism. Additionally, more than 10% of people aged 12 and older reported past-month use of illegal drugs in 2014. Of those approximately 27 million illicit drug users, 7.1 million people met the criteria for addiction (The Effects of Drug Abuse).

- Ask your teen if they know what drugs do to the brain.
- Discuss with them the risk of brain damage when using drugs.

Long-term drug and alcohol abuse can have disastrous physical and mental health consequences. As the body adapts to the presence of a substance, it requires increasing amounts of it to experience the desired results, a process known as tolerance. As a user continues to increase doses, physical dependence may develop, which may subsequently give rise to unpleasant and sometimes deadly withdrawal symptoms once the person stops using the substance.

Physical dependence is not the same as addiction, but chronic and persistent use may lead to the development of an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Addiction is characterized by compulsive use despite negative consequences. People who suffer from an addiction are unable to control their use and may experience significant impairment in their daily lives.

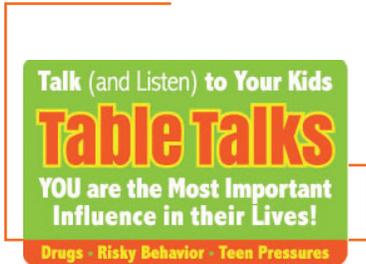
Some general consequences associated with long-term use or addiction include interferences with work, school, or home life, such as job loss, poor work or school performance, suspension or expulsion from school, legal problems, loss of close friends, divorce, and child neglect. Of course, not every user is going to experience these long-term effects, but chronic use increases the likelihood of adverse consequences.

For more information:

<http://www.projectknow.com/research/effects-of-drug-abuse/>



## february



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## Know the Facts About Marijuana

***Marijuana remains the most used illegal substance among youth.***

By the time they graduate from high school, about 45 percent of U.S. teens will have tried marijuana at least once in their lifetime. In 2015, nearly 22 percent of high school seniors reported current marijuana use, and 6 percent used marijuana daily. The annual Monitoring the Future survey has been tracking teen attitudes and drug use since 1975. Currently, the number of teens who think marijuana use is harmful is declining. This is concerning because there is growing scientific evidence that heavy, regular use of marijuana that begins during the teen years may lower a person's IQ and interfere with other aspects of functioning and well-being. The good news is that marijuana use did not increase significantly among youth from 2010 to 2015.

### ***Why do young people use marijuana?***

Young people start using marijuana for many reasons. Curiosity, peer pressure, and the desire to fit in with friends are common ones. For some, drug use begins as a means of coping with anxiety, anger, depression, boredom, and other unpleasant feelings. But, in fact, being high can be a way of simply avoiding the problems and challenges of growing up. Research also suggests that family members' use of alcohol and drugs plays a strong role in whether a young person starts using drugs. Parents, grandparents, and older siblings are models that children follow. Marijuana can be addictive. Marijuana is unsafe if you're behind the wheel. Marijuana is linked to lower grades, school failure, and poorer quality of life. Marijuana is linked to some mental illnesses (Volkow, 2016).

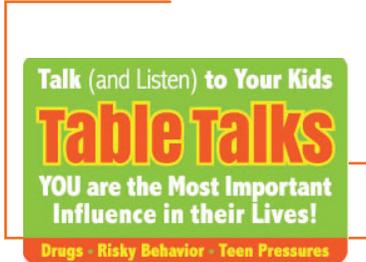
- Ask your teen what they know about marijuana.
- Discuss with your teen the facts about marijuana.

For more information:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana-facts-parents-need-to-know/letter-to-parents>



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## Know the Dangers of Marijuana for Teens

Though public perception is that marijuana is a harmless drug, research is showing it can have a damaging impact on developing brains and may lead to life-long addiction.

“Marijuana is the most common substance addiction being treated in adolescents in rehabilitation centers across the country. Like all addictive substances, marijuana is used to lessen uncomfortable feelings like anxiety and depression. Because the type of addiction is seen as less ‘intense’ in comparison to other substances such as cocaine or heroin, many people don’t realize that marijuana can cause dependence and has a withdrawal syndrome,” Garry Sigman said.

### Research shows that heavy use can lead to neurotoxicity and alternations in brain development leading to:

- Impairment in thinking
  - Poor educational outcomes and perhaps a lower IQ
  - Increased likelihood of dropping out of school
  - Symptoms of chronic bronchitis
  - Increased risk of psychosis disorders in those who are predisposed (The dangers of teens using marijuana, 2014).
- Discuss these dangers with your teen.
  - Ask your teen how he/she feels about what he/she has learned.

For more information:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/09/140925150606.htm>



## february

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Influence in their Lives!  
Drugs - Risky Behavior - Teen Pressures

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## Dangers of Driving While Smoking Marijuana

Drugs and alcohol interfere with the brain's ability to function properly. THC, the main active ingredient in marijuana, affects areas of the brain that control the body's movements, balance, coordination, memory, and judgment, so it's no surprise that marijuana and driving don't mix.

According to a recent driving study, as many as 1 in 5 teen drivers say they drove under the influence of marijuana.

More than one-third of them did not believe that marijuana affected their driving, whereas less than one-fifth of teens who drove after drinking alcohol said their driving wasn't impaired.

These numbers show that some teen drivers aren't getting the message that both alcohol and drugs—including marijuana—are dangerous risks behind the wheel. Not only that, but drivers under the influence of these substances endanger other users of the road as well (FACT: Driving After Using Marijuana Is Dangerous, 2012).

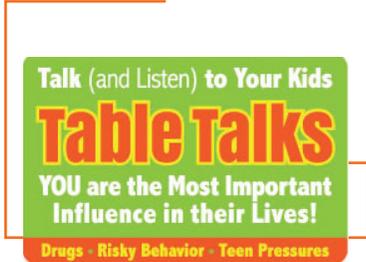
- Talk to your teen about the dangers of driving under the influence.
- Ask your teen how he/she feels about driving high.

For more information:

<https://teens.drugabuse.gov/blog/post/fact-driving-after-using-marijuana-dangerous-0>



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### Know the Dangers of Drugs on the Still Developing Brain

The brain continues to develop into adulthood and undergoes dramatic changes during adolescence.

One of the brain areas still maturing during adolescence is the prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain that enables us to assess situations, make sound decisions, and keep our emotions and desires under control. The fact that this critical part of an adolescent's brain is still a work in progress puts them at increased risk for making poor decisions (such as trying drugs or continuing to take them). Also, introducing drugs during this period of development may cause brain changes that have profound and long-lasting consequences (Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction).

- Discuss with your teen the dangers of using drugs on their developing brain.
- Discuss that early use of drugs increases their likelihood of addiction.

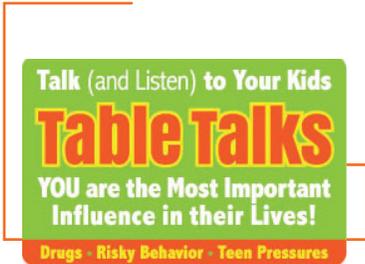
National drug use surveys indicate some children are already abusing drugs by age 12 or 13.

For more information:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/>



march



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### Positive Perceptions and Your Teen

Interviews conducted among ethnically and socio-economically diverse 13- and 14-year olds found that teens who felt good about their social standing did well over time, regardless of their actual popularity.

These teens who had positive perceptions of their own social success were increasingly less hostile and more frequently sought out by their peers as compared to teens who lacked a strong sense of their own social acceptance and were rated as unpopular by their peers (Teens' Perception That They Are Liked Found To Be At Least As Important As Actually Being Liked, 2008).

- Discuss with your teen how he/she views himself/herself.
- Discuss with your teen how he/she views the world.

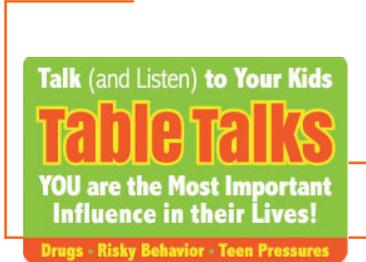
“Perceiving oneself to be liked may actually be at least as critical in determining future social outcomes for teens as is actually being liked by other teens,” says McElhaney, who called adolescents’ feelings of confidence in their own social standing a “protective factor.”

For more information:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080515073014.htm>



## march



### Importance of a Positive Attitude

One of the most important steps you can take toward achieving your greatest potential in life is to learn to monitor your attitude and its impact on your work performance, relationships and everyone around you (Why Your Attitude Is Everything).

- Discuss with your teen the importance of having a good attitude.
- Discuss with your teen how attitude affects your success.

For more information:

<http://www.success.com/article/why-your-attitude-is-everything>

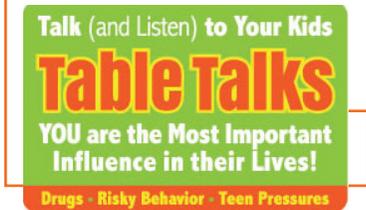
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## Teens and High Self Esteem

**54.5% of students report to normally have “high” self-esteem vs. 45.5% of teens who say they normally have “low” self-esteem** (*Report on Teens and Self Worth*).

- Discuss with your teen the importance of self-worth.
- Ask your teen how they see themselves.

95% of teens have felt inferior at some point in their lives. When asked why they have felt inferior, students selected their top three conditions.

### The main reasons students have felt inferior are:

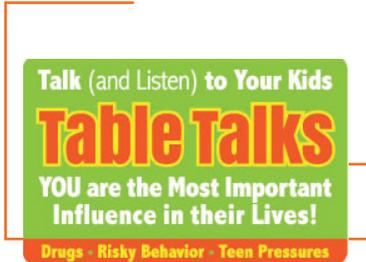
- 59% : Appearance
- 49% : Ability in some activity
- 38% : Intelligence
- 35% : Size
- 21% : Age
- 13% : Race
- 13% : Gender
- 12% : Family economic status
- 6% : Religion
- 6% : Sexual Orientation
- 84% : Teens have felt superior to another person
- 41% : Students have purposely tried to make another person feel inferior. When asked why they think people try to make someone feel inferior, the main reasons cited were:
  - Because of their own low self-esteem or insecurities: 50%
  - Because they like to feel powerful: 32%
  - Because of peer pressure, e.g. others also were making this person (or people) feel inferior: 10%
  - Because they dislike the person: 7%

For more information:

<http://www.stageoflife.com/StageHighSchool/TeensandSelfWorth.aspx>



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## Keeping Your Teen Organized and Focused

Parents can play a vital role in helping teens succeed in school by being informed and lending a little support and guidance. Even though teens are seeking independence, parental involvement is an important ingredient for academic success.

- Discuss with your teen his/her plans for the school year.
- Discuss with your teen his/her readiness to return to school.

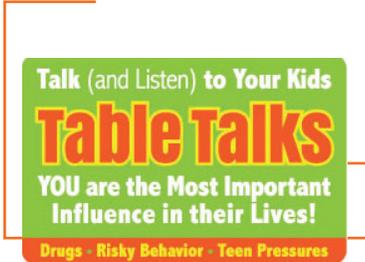
Learning and mastering the skills of getting organized, staying focused, and seeing work through to the end will help teens in just about everything they do. But this is not usually explicitly taught in high school, so teens can benefit from some parental guidance with organization and time-management skills.

For more information:

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/school-help-teens.html#>



april



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## The Importance of Responsibility

The process of helping children take responsibility and make decisions is a key task for parents. You have an important role to play in training and supporting your child to be ready for more responsibility. This means you need to plan when and in what areas to let your child start making decisions. How quickly you hand over responsibility to your teenager is up to you. It depends on many factors, including your own comfort level, your family and cultural traditions, and your child's maturity (Raising Children Network).

- Discuss with your teen the importance of responsibility.
- Ask your teen if he/she is ready to start becoming more responsible.

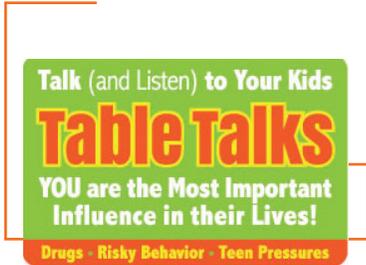
### Learning from experience

Teenagers need the opportunity to work some things out for themselves. If there is no immediate danger, life can be an effective teacher too. This approach also has the benefit of giving you more time to manage and enjoy your own life. It gives your child the chance to show you how responsible she can be too.

For more information:  
[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/responsibility\\_teenagers.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/responsibility_teenagers.html)



**april**



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### Practicing the Leadership Skills

Colleges place a strong emphasis on leadership, as any high school senior who is filling out applications can tell you. We watch movies and read books about leaders. It borders on a national obsession (Baskin, 2012).

- Talk to your teen about getting involved in activities that help teach leadership.
- Discuss with your teen the importance of practicing the leadership skills he/she has learned.

Leading is more about learning specific skills than possessing inherent qualities. In this way, being a leader is like being an athlete. Certainly, some children are born with attributes that aid in athletics, such as size and quick reflexes. But success in athletics requires thousands of hours of practice to acquire the skills needed for success. Regardless of genetics, there is no substitute for practicing forehands and backhands if one wishes to excel at tennis. Ultimately, success has much more to do with the skills honed through practice than genetics.

For more information:  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/smoers-and-more/201212/teaching-teens-lead>



april

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## The Importance of Getting an Education

Today's economy calls for critical skills that go beyond the basics. To ensure the economic strength of our country, students must graduate high school ready for college, careers and life. The U.S. Department of Education has invested more than \$1 billion in early education; implemented strategies that improve achievement and close opportunity gaps, and awarded billions of dollars through such grant programs as Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, and School Improvement Grants; and expanded college access and affordability for families (U.S. High School Graduation Rate Hits New Record High, 2015).

- Discuss with your teen the importance of getting an education.
- Discuss with your teen the disadvantages of dropping out of school.

For more information:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-high-school-graduation-rate-hits-new-record-high>



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## Your Teen's Actions and Reactions

They say you never escape high school. And for better or worse, science is lending some credibility to that old saw. Thanks to sophisticated imaging technology and a raft of longitudinal studies, we're learning that the teen years are a period of crucial brain development subject to a host of environmental and genetic factors.

This emerging research sheds light not only on why teenagers act the way they do, but how the experiences of adolescence—from rejection to binge drinking—can affect who we become as adults, how we handle stress, and the way we bond with others (JUSKALIAN, 2016).

- Discuss with your teen how the actions they are doing now will affect their life in the future.
- Discuss with your teen that the way they treat people now will affect that person in the future.

For more information:

<http://www.newsweek.com/how-teen-experiences-affect-your-brain-life-69099>



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## What is Drug Addiction?

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain—they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long-lasting, and can lead to the harmful behaviors seen in people who abuse drugs (Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction).

- Ask your teen if they understand what addiction is.
- Explain to your teen why people use drugs:
  - To feel good
  - To feel better
  - To do better
  - Curiosity and “because others are doing it”

## What are the risk factors for addiction?

- Environmental
  - Home and Family
  - Peer and School
- Biological
  - Scientists estimate that genetic factors account for between 40 and 60 percent of a person’s vulnerability to addiction; this includes the effects of environmental factors on the function and expression of a person’s genes. A person’s stage of development and other medical conditions they may have are also factors. Adolescents and people with mental disorders are at greater risk of drug abuse and addiction than the general population.
- Other factors
  - Method of Administration
  - Early Use

For more information:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/drug-abuse-addiction>



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## The Dangers of Drug Abuse and Addiction

Teens are far more likely to believe many drugs are safe because: they aren't old enough to have seen the damage drugs can do; they haven't perceived any dangers on seeing others use them; they don't equate drug abuse with risky behavior, such as driving under the influence, or having unprotected sex (which can lead to pregnancy or the contraction of STDs like HIV); they are led by people they know and trust into a false sense of security around drugs despite the dangerous culture that surrounds many of them (Teen Addiction Dangers).



- Talk to your teen about the real dangers of drug abuse.
- Show your teen photos of people who abuse drugs.

For more information:

<http://www.myaddiction.com/categories/teen-addiction-dangers.html>

<http://www.amusingplanet.com/2011/03/shocking-pictures-show-consequences-of.html>



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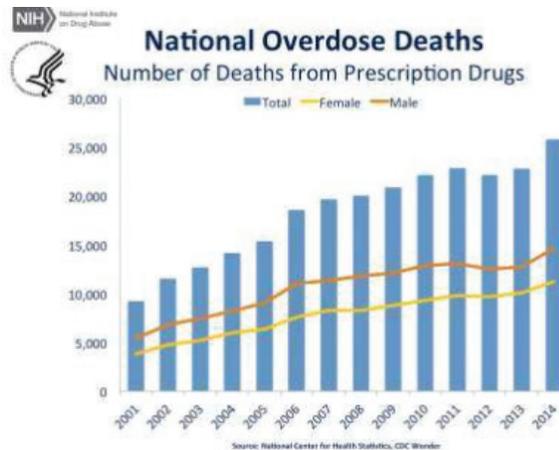
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## Dangers of Prescription Drugs

Almost 1 in every 4 teens in America, say they have misused or abused a prescription drug. Two-thirds of people 12 and older (68%) who have abused prescription pain relievers within the past year say they got them from a friend or relative (Facts and Figures).



National Overdose Deaths—Number of Deaths from Prescription Drugs. The figure above is a bar chart showing the total number of U.S. overdose deaths involving prescription drugs from 2001 to 2014. The chart is overlaid by a line graph showing the number of deaths by females and males. From 2001 to 2014 there was a 2.8-fold increase in the total number of deaths.

- Discuss the risk involved with prescription drugs.
- Ask your teen if they have ever taken anything that wasn't prescribed to them.

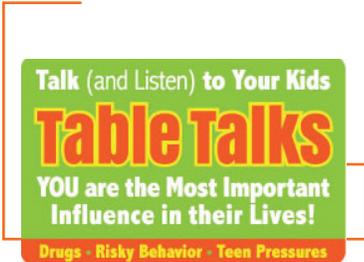
For more information:

<http://www.rxsafetymatters.org/families-and-communities/facts-and-figures/>

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>



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### Alcohol Risks and Teen Age Deaths...Did You Know?

On an average summer day, about 11,000 youth will take their first drink of alcohol.

- Discuss with your teen how many people's lives are taken every day to alcohol.
- Ask your teen's opinion about underage drinking

**Causes many deaths** Based on data from 2006–2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that, on average, alcohol is a factor in the deaths of 4,358 young people under age 21 each year. This includes:

- 1,580 deaths from motor vehicle crashes
- 1,269 from homicides
- 245 from alcohol poisoning, falls, burns, and drowning
- 492 from suicides

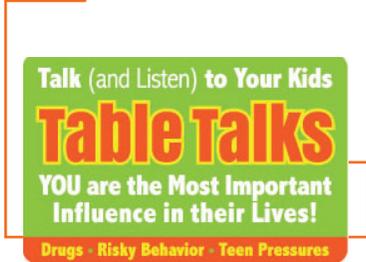
**Causes many injuries** Drinking alcohol can cause kids to have accidents and get hurt. In 2011 alone, about 188,000 people under age 21 visited an emergency room for alcohol-related injuries.

For more information:

[http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/UnderageDrinking/Underage\\_Fact.pdf](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/UnderageDrinking/Underage_Fact.pdf)



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## Encourage Your Teen to Build Healthy Relationships

Relationships can play a major role in our lives, especially during the teen years. However, not all relationships are healthy. Sometimes we associate with people who may not have our best interests in mind. It's vital that you learn to recognize a healthy relationship from a harmful one (ABCs of a Healthy Relationship).

- Discuss with your teen what a healthy relationship consists of.
- Discuss with your teen what an unhealthy relationship involves.

The ABCs of Healthy Relationships – Awareness, Balance, and Choices – includes information, skill building, value clarification activities, resources, and conversation starters.

### Danger Signs of an Unhealthy Relationship

- Red Lights
- Forms of Abuse
- Dating Violence Cycle
- Myths of Dating Violence
- Abusive Romantic Relationship

For more information:  
<http://www.pamf.org/teen/abc/>



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## Healthy Choices

Throughout their teenage years, your child will be confronted with many difficult situations where choosing to make a safe and healthy decision may not be the easiest – or most obvious – thing to do (Helping Your Teen Make).

- Discuss with your teen how to make better decisions.
- Discuss with your teen what influences him/her when it comes to making a decision.

Whenever your teen comes to talk to you regarding a decision he or she is currently facing, make the most out of the opportunity! Your approach to any discussion has a real impact on whether or not you teen feels comfortable coming to talk to you in the future.

The tips we have provided below are designed to help you convey to your teen that you want to help, but won't try to control the situation by taking the decision out of their hands or making the decision for them.

- Allow your teen to describe the problem or situation in their own words.
- Ask how he or she feels about the problem.
- Ask questions that avoid “yes” or “no” responses. These questions usually begin with “how,” “why,” or “what.”
- Really listen to what your teen is saying instead of thinking about your responses.
- Try to put yourself in your teen's shoes to understand his or her thoughts.
- Talk with your teen about choices.
- Teens sometimes believe they don't have any choice in the outcome of difficult situations.
- Help your teen to see alternatives that may be smarter, more responsible options.
- Define what constitutes a safe or smart choice. Help your teen understand that their health is often the most important factor involved in decision-making.
- Help your teen to identify and compare the possible consequences of all of the available choices.
- How will the results affect your teen's goals? For example, how would smoking affect playing on the soccer team?
- Explain (without lecturing) the consequences of different choices.
- Allow your teen to make a decision and carry it out.
- Ask if your teen has a plan.
- Remember, your teen may make different choices than you would prefer.
- Later, ask your teen how things worked out.
- What did he or she learn from the decision?
- Allow your teen to live and learn from mistakes.
- Praise your teen when he or she makes a good choice.

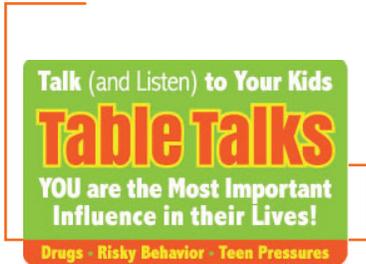
For more information:

<http://www.pamf.org/parenting-teens/emotions/responsible-choices/choices.html>

[www.steeredstraight.org](http://www.steeredstraight.org) • (phone) 856.691.6676 • (email) [info@steeredstraight.com](mailto:info@steeredstraight.com)



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## Your Teen and Intimate Relationships

Early teenage relationships often involve exploring physical intimacy and sexual feelings. You might not feel ready for this, but you have an important role in guiding and supporting your child through this important developmental stage (Raising Children Network, with the Centre for Adolescent Health).

- Discuss with your child what intimate relationships are.
- Discuss with your child how to know when the time is right.

### When teenage relationships start

There isn't a 'right age' to start having relationships – every child is different, and every family will feel differently about this issue. But here are some averages:

- From 9-11 years, your child might start to show more independence from the family and more interest in friends.
- From 10-14 years, your child might want to spend more time in mixed gender groups, which might eventually end up in a romantic relationship.
- From 15-19 years, romantic relationships can become central to social life. Friendships might become deeper and more stable.

For more information:

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/relationships\\_teenagers.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/relationships_teenagers.html)



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## Teens and Sexual Behavior

Not all teenage relationships include sex, but most teenagers will experiment with sexual behavior at some stage. This is why your child needs clear information on contraception, safe sex and sexually transmitted diseases (STIs). This could also be your chance to talk together about dealing with unwanted sexual and peer pressure.

If you keep the lines of communication open and let your child know that you're there to listen, he'll be more likely to come to you with questions and concerns (Raising Children Network, with the Centre for Adolescent Health).

- Discuss with your teen the importance of safe sex.
- Discuss with your teen the dangers associated with unprotected sex.

*Vaginal penetrative sex* - Is when a man's penis enters a woman's vagina.

If a condom is not used, there's a risk of pregnancy and getting or passing on STIs, including:

- chlamydia
- genital herpes
- genital warts
- gonorrhoea
- HIV
- syphilis

For more information:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/STIs/Pages/Sexualactivitiesandrisk.aspx>



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### Safe-Summer Bucket List

It's a parent's summertime nightmare. While you're at work all day, your tween or teen is at home. Alone. With nothing to do. So what does she do? She turns your house into party central.

- Discuss with your teen some safe and fun things they may want to do this summer.
- Discuss with your teen consequences for not abiding by the rules, and stick to it.

How to kick off your search for summer plans:

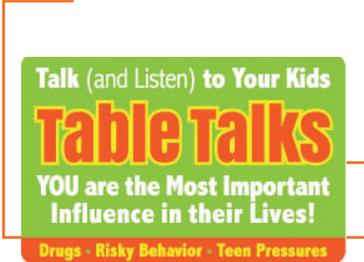
- Check with the school counseling office. Most counseling offices have a bulletin board of job postings and internship opportunities for middle and high school students.
- Use your network. Friends, neighbors, and work colleagues can be a rich source of summer job ideas.
- Search online parents' websites. Many towns and cities now have parenting websites that offer plenty of summer possibilities. ParentsConnect:Omaha, for example, offers listings for camps in the Omaha area, and San Francisco's SFKids.org, features an entire section on youth employment.
- Follow your child's interests. Have an aspiring vet? Check in for opportunities at your local SPCA. Your soccer enthusiast will likely make a great coach at a pee-wee soccer camp. A bookworm might be happier working at the local library or bookstore, and an aspiring actor could find a role in summer stock.

For more information:

<http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/youth-summer-camp-teen-tween/>



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## Teen Safety and Parties

As a parent, you know the importance of your teen's social life and that parties are a way to socialize and relax. But an unsupervised or poorly planned party can result in unwanted or even tragic consequences. However, parental responsibility is the key to a fun and safe party.

- Discuss with your teen about safety at parties.
- Discuss with your teen why parental chaperoning is important.

**Communication and honesty are important to keep your teen safe.** Teens whose parents talk with them regularly about drugs and alcohol are 42% less likely to use substances than those whose parents don't. Tell your teens that you expect them not to use alcohol or other drugs at parties.

**Parent networking is the best prevention tool to combat underage drinking.** Get to know your teen's friends and their parents. If your teen is planning on going to a party, call the parents to ensure that they will be home and that they will not allow drugs or alcohol. If this is not possible, don't let your teen go.

**Parents are legally responsible for anything that happens to a minor who has been served alcohol or other drugs in their home.** If anyone brings alcohol or other drugs to your home, be prepared to contact their parents. And if someone comes to your home already intoxicated, make sure that they get home safely. Help your teen feel responsible for this as well.

For more information:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-To-Teen-Parties.aspx>



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## Making a Teen Safety Party Plan

Partying is fun for people of all ages. Teenagers in particular like to party. This may include clubbing, attending a concert or festival, having a party at home or going to a party at a friend's house. If you follow a few simple suggestions, it will help you stay safe while you're having a good time.

- Discuss with your teen how to make a safety plan.
- Discuss with your teen to never be afraid to call home and ask for help
- Remember that you don't have to use drugs or alcohol or other drugs to have fun.
- Eat well before you leave home. A full stomach slows absorption of alcohol.
- Drink in moderation. Don't let others top up your drinks and go for low alcohol options wherever possible.
- The best way to avoid drug-related problems is not to use at all. If you do, make sure you know what you're taking and find out how to reduce the risks of overdose or injury. Never mix drugs with alcohol or other drugs.
- Trust your own judgment. Don't let peer pressure sway you into doing anything you don't want to do. It's okay to say no.
- Keep your wits about you and stay close to friends you trust.
- Take condoms with you if you think you might end up having sex – and use them.
- Don't get into a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- Remember that your judgment may be impaired if you've been drinking or taking drugs – don't take risks you may regret, such as diving into water if you don't know how deep it is or fooling around near swimming pools.
- Leave for somewhere safe if you feel unsafe at a venue or party.

For more information:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/partying-safely-tips-for-teenagers/>



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## Driving Risks

The relationship between age and driving behavior has interested highway safety researchers and administrators for many years. **The greatest risk of traffic crashes is among teenage drivers and the leading cause of death for teenagers across the U.S.** For both men and women, drivers aged 16 to 19 years of age have the highest average annual crash and traffic violation rates of any other age group.

- Discuss with your teen the necessity of staying safe during the holiday
- Discuss with your teen the dangers of being on the roadway during the holiday

**Teenage Driver Crash Risk Factors** The traffic accident rates for 16- to 19-year old drivers are higher than those for any other age group. Following is a list of their primary risk factors.

**Poor Hazard Detection** The ability to detect hazards in the driving environment depends upon perceptual and information-gathering skills and involves properly identifying stimuli as potential threats. It takes time for young novice drivers to acquire this ability.

**Low Risk Perception** Risk perception involves subjectively assessing the degree of threat posed by a hazard and one's ability to deal with the threat. Young novice drivers tend to underestimate the crash risk in hazardous situations and overestimate their ability to avoid the threats they identify.

**Risk Taking** Teenagers tend to take more risks while driving partly due to their overconfidence in their driving abilities. Young novice drivers are more likely to engage in risky behaviors like speeding, tailgating, running red lights, violating traffic signs and signals, making illegal turns, passing dangerously, and failure to yield to pedestrians.

**Not Wearing Seat Belts** Teenagers tend to wear safety belts less often than older drivers. Why?

**Lack of skill** Novice teenage drivers have not yet completely mastered basic vehicle handling skills and safe-driving knowledge they need to drive safely.

**Alcohol and Drugs** Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs is a common cause of serious crashes, especially fatal ones, involving teenage drivers. Teenagers who drink and drive are at much greater risk of serious crashes than are older drivers with equal concentrations of alcohol in their blood.

**Carrying Passengers** For teenagers, the risk of being in a crash increases when they transport passengers, the fatality risk of drivers aged 16-17 years is 3.6 times higher when they are driving with passengers than when they are driving alone, and the relative risk of a fatal crash increases as the number of passengers increases. Passengers who are age peers may distract the teen drivers and encourage them to take more risks, especially for young males riding with young male drivers.

**Night Driving** The per mile crash rate for teenage drivers is 3 times higher after 9:00 pm. This is because the task of driving at night is more difficult; they have less experience driving at night than during the day; they are more sleep deprived, and/or because teenage recreational driving, which often involves alcohol, is more likely to occur at night.

For more information:

[https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/teenweb/more\\_btn6/traffic/traffic](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/teenweb/more_btn6/traffic/traffic)

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