



## Conversation Starters

### Help for Talking with Your Teen about Underage Drinking

How do you begin a conversation with your teen about the risks of underage drinking? Start by watching the videos on The Risk is Real website ([www.theriskisreal.org](http://www.theriskisreal.org)). Then take a few minutes to share how you both felt about the stories and the people in the videos. The suggested questions below can also help you start the conversation. And remember, parents: listen more than you talk!

- What would you do if someone offered you alcohol at a party? What do you think [name a close friend of your teen] would do?
- Do you believe that a party is more fun when alcohol is involved? Why?
- What makes for a "good time" when you and your friends get together?
- Underage drinking is illegal. What risks does any illegal activity place on our family? How do you think that would make you feel?
- Talk about all of the things your family does to try to live a healthy life. Then ask your teen: how would drinking alcohol interfere with all of our other activities?
- Ask your teen about his/her future dreams and goals. What does your teen hope to accomplish? How would underage drinking impact that?
- Discuss some of the unhealthy risks you expect your teen to avoid, including but not limited to underage drinking. Ask your teen: how can I help you stay on the right track?
- Some experts say that kids drink to relieve the stress and pressure of their lives. Ask your teen: do you feel a lot of anxiety? How do you relieve stress in your life? How can I help?

**Teens need to know where their parents stand when it comes to underage drinking.** Share your honest expectations and any family history of alcohol abuse. Teens often ask their parents about their own previous teenage behaviors; experts recommend that you keep self-disclosure to a minimum, **and never glorify drinking**. Simply tell your children that you remember how difficult making choices can be during the teenage years, and remind them of your expectations.

It's not always easy to talk with our kids about tough topics, but studies show that involved parents can have a positive effect on the health of their children.