

MAKING

Prom

A NIGHT TO
REMEMBER

Parents
have a role
to play!



Prom

HAS FINALLY ARRIVED.

A NIGHT WHEN KIDS GET TO CELEBRATE THE END OF HIGH SCHOOL AND ALL THEIR HARD WORK.



When teens think of prom, they immediately think “party” and of all the fun they can have with friends. As a parent, you may feel a sense of pride or be filled with concern.

This is normal, especially since the media portray prom night with images of teens in ball gowns and tuxes getting drunk, getting high and having sex.

For most teens, this is not the reality. For you as a parent, prom is yet another opportunity to reinforce the messages you want to send to your child about sex, drugs and alcohol.

It can be hard to talk to teens about your concerns without seeming like you don't trust them. But you can help them experience the best night of their lives—safely.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

When the topic of prom or the after party comes up, use the opportunity to talk to teens about...

- Their expectations and what prom means to them.
- Your own prom: funny things that happened and what made it memorable.
- Your concerns about prom and the after party, if you have any.



A QUESTION OF SAFETY

Have you asked the following questions to ensure they stay safe?

- Where are prom and the after party being held?
- How are they getting there?
- Will adults be present?
- Is there a way you can contact them?
- Are they sleeping over? How will they get home?

To help them get back safely, you can offer a ride to them and their friends, give money for a cab ride, or even buy them pre-paid taxi coupons.

Tell them they can reach you at any time, no matter what happens.

Tell teens that they can still have fun while drinking responsibly.
Alcohol is not essential for a good time!

Once they start high school, teens start receiving different prevention messages about alcohol, drugs and sex. You may have already talked about these issues a number of times.

As a parent, you know your child best. You need to choose the messages you think are important reminders for prom. Here are some ways to get the conversation started.

TALK ABOUT

drinking

DOES YOUR TEEN WANT TO CELEBRATE? WILL HE OR SHE HAVE A FEW DRINKS? HOW WILL YOU REACT?

From a legal standpoint, alcohol can't be served to anyone under the age of 18. However, teens may still succeed in getting some. Remind them about the responsibility that comes with alcohol consumption.

- Support their desire not to drink. Even if their friends are drinking, they have the right to say no and to have fun without alcohol.
- To ensure they have a good time, help teens determine how much alcohol is too much.
- Tell them it is important to drink slowly and not to drink on an empty stomach. Alcohol does not have an immediate effect. Remind them about drinking in a safe place.
- Also talk about the risks associated with abusive alcohol consumption or “binge drinking” (e.g., impaired judgment, blackouts, doing things they regret, etc.).
- Stress that they need to know their limits and to respect these limits (e.g., “If you can't speak or walk properly or feel like the room is spinning, stop drinking”).

- Help teens find good solutions to the following situations:
Your friends are pressuring you to drink more than you want to. What do you do?
Your friend has been drinking and wants to drive. How do you convince him not to?

REMIND THEM THAT ALCOHOL AND CERTAIN SITUATIONS JUST DON'T MIX.

When...

- They are driving a vehicle. For people aged 21 and under, there is zero tolerance for drinking and driving.
- They are responsible for the safety of other people.
- They need to make important decisions.



DID YOU KNOW?

Young people use condoms less often when they have unplanned sex or when they are under the effect of alcohol or drugs.

TALK ABOUT

drugs

Below are some important things to talk to teens about to help them face any pressure to use drugs.

- They have a right to say no. They don't have to justify themselves to their friends. They can have fun without using drugs.
- Mixing alcohol and drugs is dangerous. You don't know where the drug comes from or how concentrated it is, so you can't know what effect it will have.
- Taking a number of different drugs in the same night can also be risky.
- Drugs affect your perception of time and your vision and short-term memory.
- As with alcohol, you can't drive a vehicle under the influence of drugs.

DID YOU KNOW?

The website www.intenseanaturel.com has a lot of information for teens about alcohol, drugs and sex.



TALK ABOUT

sex

With all the fun and excitement surrounding prom, this event can be a way for some teens to get closer to someone they like. For others, it can be an opportunity to have sex.

Bring up prom and the after party to...

- Understand your teens' intentions about having sex at the after party (e.g., "Do you think it's the best time?").
- Make sure they have access to condoms.
- Remind them that it is more difficult for someone who has consumed alcohol or drugs to consent to sex.
- Remind them that people have the right to consent to sex at first and then change their minds and refuse, even in the heat of the moment.

If they are thinking about having sex at the after party...

Help your teens decide how to keep this night memorable. For example, if they do have sex, it should be:

- With someone they know.
- With a method of contraception (e.g., the pill) and protection (e.g., condom) against sexually transmitted infections.
- Desired by both partners.
- A pleasurable moment.



HELPING FRIENDS

IS IMPORTANT TOO



Tell teens that it's a good idea to talk to their friends about their expectations for prom. They can ask the following questions to start a conversation: How do they imagine the event? How can they help each other in the case of a problem or something unexpected? How can they signal an uncomfortable situation? Which adult can they contact if there's a problem?

You can never put too much stress on the importance of support between friends: Is your friend doing something he doesn't want to do? Do you think he's doing something he may regret? Tell him. Is her safety threatened? Help her. That's what friends are for!

OVERALL

Prom is a chance to start a dialogue with teens about many subjects. As an event that marks the end of their high school careers, prom is something they will think back on the rest of their lives.

Your main role as a parent is to prepare teens for this important night. But once prom arrives, you have to trust them.

Make sure that you're available throughout the evening in case they need to contact you. Be there the next day simply to talk and see whether the event met their expectations.

Know that you can play a role in making your teen's prom the best experience possible.

