

# YOU

really can influence  
your teenager.

What you *say* and *do* matters.



## talk with your teen

Find small moments to listen to your teen; encourage conversation.

Give your teen a chance to teach you something new.

Let your teen know why it is important for them to avoid alcohol and drugs.

Give your teenager the skills, and the words, to say "no" to alcohol and drugs.



## know your teen

Take time to know your teen's friends; get to know their parents.

Be awake when your teen arrives home at night and know the signs of alcohol and drug use.

Be prepared. Plan what you would do if you find that your teen has been drinking or using drugs.



## model good behavior

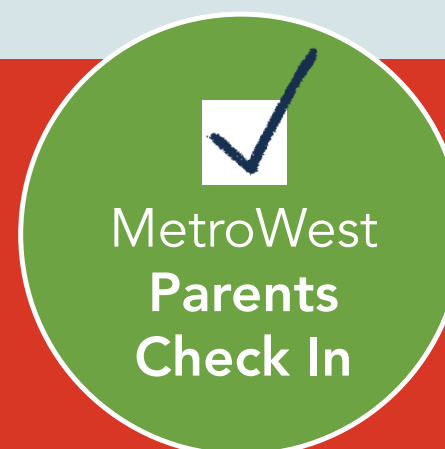
Set a good example. Your teen will notice the decisions you make about drinking and drug use.

Keep track of alcohol or prescription drugs in your home and make sure they are not accessible to teens.

Avoid messages that glorify or promote alcohol use.

Adapted from materials created by the Maine Office of Substance Abuse

Parents who Check In can  
prevent teen substance use.



For more tips, visit  
[www.parentscheckin.org](http://www.parentscheckin.org)

# TEENS

are not the only ones  
who need to Check In:  
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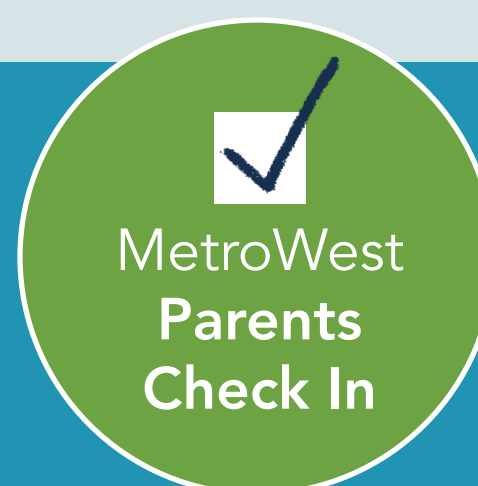
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## You have the power to make a difference!

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# All teens

are at risk of abusing  
alcohol, drugs,  
and prescription medications  
*...even teens you might not expect.*

## The 2006 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey shows:

- 42% of MetroWest students in grades 9–12 have used alcohol in the last month.
- 25% reported binge drinking (five or more alcoholic drinks in a row) in the past 30 days.
- 11% have misused prescription drugs in their lifetime.

## Check In means:

**talk** with your teen

**know** your teen

**model** good behavior

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# Some **facts** about alcohol—the most prevalent substance used by teens

## Alcohol & Your Teen's Health

*As teens grow and mature, their bodies go through many changes. Just as important are the changes that take place in their brains.*

- One of the most important times for brain development is between the ages of 10–20.
- Research shows the brain is not fully mature until the mid-20s. And not all parts of the brain mature at the same time.
- The difference in how parts of the brain grow can cause a teen to make impulsive decisions, ignore consequences, and act on emotions that put them at risk.

## Alcohol Use Affects how Teen Brains Develop

- Studies show that alcohol affects teens differently than adults. Teens are at a greater risk of negative consequences from drinking alcohol.
- New studies show that alcohol use can cause long-term damage to a teen's brain. It can permanently affect how portions of the brain develop.
- Alcohol use can affect how a teen learns and their coordination and motor skills.

## Alcohol Dependence

*Many parents don't realize how serious the consequences of teen alcohol use can be.*

- Research shows that 40% of teens who begin drinking before age 15 are likely to develop alcohol dependence.
- Waiting until age 21 lowers that risk by 70%. Each year a teen delays drinking alcohol, they lower the odds of future alcohol dependence by 14% and alcohol abuse by 8.3%.

*By delaying teen alcohol use, you can greatly improve your teen's chances of leading a healthier life now and in the future.*

## Emotional and Psychological Effects

Adolescence is a time of transition, with changing expectations and friendships that expose teens to new situations and stresses.

- Research shows a link between stress and alcohol consumption.
- The physical effects of growing, which include hormonal changes that affect a teen's mood and behavior, may contribute to an increased risk of alcohol consumption during adolescence.
- Alcohol impairs judgment and has been strongly linked to teenage depression.

*During this time of dramatic change, your teen needs your support and encouragement to avoid alcohol and drug use.*

Adapted from materials created by the Maine Office of Substance Abuse

## Parents: Here is what you can do

- **Keep track** of alcohol or prescription drugs in your home and make sure they are not accessible to teens.
- **Set and enforce** clear rules.
- **Check in** with your teen often.
- **Be awake** when your teen comes home at night and know the signs of alcohol and drug use.
- **Network** with other parents.

