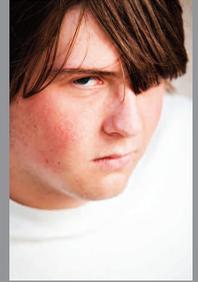
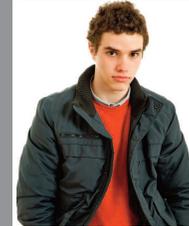


Communicating is Key to Keeping Your Teen Safe

Since you've become a parent, you've spent a lot of time and energy teaching your child how to exercise good judgment so that he or she can be healthy and safe. Now that your child is a teenager and becoming independent, these skills are even more important to their well-being. In fact, the ability to think through consequences of a decision beforehand can often make the difference between experiencing harm or staying safe.



Continue communicating with your child about how to stay safe, especially when socializing. Help your child be prepared for any situation they may encounter. The following tips will help you:

State firmly that your child should never get in a car with someone who has been drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Let them know that you will pick them up at any time of night if they have been drinking or feel unsafe for any reason – no questions asked.

Remind your child that it is illegal -- to consume alcohol under the age of 21.

Speak frankly about the consequences of excessive drinking and the use of drugs. State specifically that these behaviors are illegal and can lead to loss of driving privileges and have even more serious consequences such as sexual aggression, violence, arrest and other problems that can affect them for years.

Insist that they make agreements with friends about never leaving anyone behind or alone.

Help them learn to say "NO" when someone wants them to do something they don't want to do.

Get to know their friends, their parents and know how to contact them.

Keep your child's number, friends' and their parents' numbers in your cell phone.

Make sure your child knows how to contact their friends' parents in an emergency.

Instruct them to leave any situation that is uncomfortable for them. When they are in doubt, tell them to call 9-1-1.

Remind your child to call 9-1-1 if one of their friends has a medical emergency related to excessive drinking and tell them to stay with the friend until medical help arrives.

Encourage them to call 2-1-1 if they want to talk or find out about other resources for help.

If you would like to learn more about how to talk with your child, please call
The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources,
a program of *Children's Aid and Family Services*, at 201-488-8680 or visit www.tcdr.org.