

ALCOHOL EXPOSURE DURING THE HOLIDAYS



With the holidays approaching many parents are concerned with checking off their gift shopping lists, decorating their homes and organizing and executing a holiday get together. What they often forget is to keep children in a safe environment. Holiday parties should not represent an increase in drug and alcohol usage around children. It is illegal to host any kind of alcoholic party for people under the age of 21. For adults, holiday parties are often associated with alcohol and casual drinking, but it is still crucial to make sure no child is participating in these activities and are not tempted to. It is also essential to maintain open communication, your child must understand the importance of staying away from drugs and alcohol under any circumstance. Parents can avoid these accidents with a few of the following tips:

- Be clear with your expectations. Let your child know that although some adults may be drinking alcohol, they are still not allowed to consume any alcoholic beverage.
- Teach your children that they can have a good time without alcohol, plan a non-alcoholic kid friendly party.
- Help your children serve traditional drinks without alcohol. Such as cider, eggnog, or punch/juice.

For underage youth, it is necessary to monitor all temptations or options. With all the social activities that accompany the holiday season it is important to closely pay attention to the age of anyone who is consuming alcohol. A few tips can help avoid any mishaps:

- Never serve alcohol to underage youth. The only way to ensure a person is over 21 is to check their ID.
- If you maintain alcohol at home make sure to keep track of your supply at all times.

- Establish a friendly relationship with parents of friends that way if your child is going to a party you can call ahead and make sure there will be no drugs or alcohol involved. You can also check to make sure there will be a responsible adult in charge of the event.
- Make sure your child is maintaining healthy friendships, having friends who drink puts your kid at greater risk of influence.
- Keep tabs on your child's schedule, knowing their whereabouts helps you supervise any wrong behavior and it will avoid any confusion about your child's intentions and activities.
- Do not support underage drinking under any circumstance. Avoid making any jokes that involve drugs or drunkenness; showing acceptance of these behaviors may incline your child to experiment illegal substances.

During these holidays keep your children safe and away from the harms of drugs and alcohol. Establish house rules about teen drinking. When parents are clear on their "no alcohol" rules, their children are less likely to begin drinking. BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL. If you use alcohol, set a good example and drink responsibly; teach your kids good decision making skills. Adopting these tips will ensure a smooth sailing holiday season, help avoid issues and make room for all the joys of the season.

Happy Holidays!

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