

Not sure how, or when, to talk with your children about alcohol?

It's never too early to talk to your children about alcohol, and to encourage them to talk with you. Before age 9, children typically view drinking negatively, but between the ages of 9 and 13, they start to view alcohol more positively, so it is very important to begin talking with your children when they are around 7 years old. They want you to talk to them about alcohol and drugs. Some children become curious and try drinking as early as 9 years old, so begin talking early.

Speak with your 7, 8, 9 and 10 year olds about Alcohol.

Here's what to say... Ask them...

Q Is beer alcohol?

A Yes

Q Are Breezer's, Wick'ds and Twisted Tea alcohol?

A Yes

Q Is the alcohol in beer, Breezer's and Twisted Tea's different to the alcohol in rum and whisky?

A No, all the alcohol is the same.

Q Is alcohol very dangerous for children and young people?

A Yes, alcohol is very dangerous for children and young people and they should never drink it. It is dangerous for adults too and adults who choose to drink should only drink in moderation. Many adults choose not to drink at all.

Q Is it true that if a young person drinks alcohol their brain won't grow and develop properly?

A Yes, this is true, alcohol is very dangerous for a young person's brain, it hurts adult's brains too, that's why many adults choose not to drink.

Q Is it true that if a young person drinks alcohol they are more likely to grow up to be an alcoholic?

A Yes, this is true.

Q Is alcohol a drug?

A Yes

Q What age does the law say you have to be to drink alcohol?

A 18

Q Can you name some healthy and safe things you can do if you are feeling upset, hurt or anxious about something?

A Go for a walk. Pray about it. Write about it. Draw about it. Talk to a trusted adult about it.

Q Do you think I would be extremely upset if I learned you had tried alcohol?

A Yes

Q Do you know what you can say if someone tries to pressure you to try alcohol?

A You can say, "No thanks I'm not into that stuff" or "No I don't want to, come on lets watch a movie instead" or "No way, my parents would kill me, absolutely no way" or "No way, not for me, I know what that stuff can do to me".

Q Is it true, that some adults choose not to drink alcohol at all?

A Yes, it is true, that some adults choose not to drink alcohol at all.

Here's how to answer the tough questions...

Why do you drink? You could say—To enhance a meal, to share good times with friends, or to celebrate a special occasion, but, adults who choose to drink should always drink in moderation and some people shouldn't drink at all, including children who are underage.

You drink alcohol, so why can't I? You could say—Underage drinking is against the law, and for good reason. Adult's bodies are fully grown, so alcohol is less harmful for them, but children's bodies are still growing so alcohol would have a greater negative impact on their health.

Did you drink when you were a child? If you drank as a teenager, experts recommend that you give an honest answer. Explain why you were tempted to try alcohol and why underage drinking is dangerous and how doing it did not serve you well, you might even share about a negative underage drinking experience of yours.

And Remember

AS CHILDREN GET OLDER, THE CHANCE THEY WILL TRY ALCOHOL INCREASES

One conversation isn't enough to give them the information and guidance they need. Keep talking openly and honestly about alcohol. You have the ability to positively influence your child's decisions about underage drinking.

LOTS OF LITTLE TALKS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN ONE "BIG TALK"

Sitting down for the "big talk" about alcohol can be intimidating for both you and your child. Try using everyday opportunities to talk – in the car, during dinner, or while you and your child are watching TV.

WHAT YOU DO IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT YOU SAY

Simply stated, children copy their parent's behavior, therefore model restraint in your own life and set a good example. If you or your partner struggles with alcohol use, seek professional help.

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