



Working Together to Reduce Underage Substance Use



Celebrate Safely: Tips for a Safe Winter Break

The First Step to Prevention-Lock Up Your Alcohol

You may be hosting a holiday celebration this holiday season. If you are, consider if alcohol will be sitting out, un-monitored with kids or teens in the house. Many teens will experiment with alcohol for the first time on special occasions such as a holiday. (Reminder: it may be your teen's friend who experiments at your home!) Consider if there's a way to keep the alcohol away from those under 21. Locking up alcohol is one of the safest, easiest ways to reduce access in the home.

Be aware that Social Host Ordinances are in effect in many of our local communities which may make you liable for minors accessing alcohol in your home. Want to know more, [click here](#).

Limiting Access is key to protecting your family and your teen's friends.



Modeling Safe, Healthy Use

We may think that alcohol is part of every holiday gathering, but many families celebrate the season without alcohol. Think about the role alcohol plays in family parties and traditions.

Not unlike toddlers, teens are very observant! Honor and model healthy choices.

There are very few families that aren't touched by substance abuse and our teens often know that something isn't right. Create time this season for honest discussion. Take advantage of teachable moments and make sure to share your views on substance use.

Set and enforce clear limits and curfews. It's important to communicate your expectations for New Year's Eve and remember that curfew laws apply during breaks (see [Hennepin County Curfew](#) or [Carver County Curfew](#)).

Ensure your kids have sober, safe New Year's Eve plans. If your child will be attending a gathering, make sure that you have contact with the host family and know the shared rules and expectations.

Keep Talking to Your Child About Alcohol, Marijuana and E-Cigarettes

It's important to keep talking to your kids, even if you don't think they're using. You may have heard others say, "I would know if my kid is using." Not necessarily. Some common symptoms are often overlooked. [Click here](#) to learn what to look for.

Talking often (several times a month) can prevent use or catch it early on. Talk candidly about the risks of drugs and alcohol, specifically consequences that are most relevant to your child (poor athletic performance, removal of phone/car privileges, impact on brain development, etc.).

Reinforcing your teen's good decisions goes a long way; many Minnetonka students have shared that they don't drink or do drugs, because they don't want to disappoint their parents or lose their trust. As students age, the likelihood that they'll use goes up.

With open communication you can consistently reinforce your family values and expectations when it comes to substance use. They need that support!

Tonka CARES is a group of Minnetonka community members and partners who join together around preventing and reducing youth substance use.

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