

Summer sense: A parent's guide to teenage parties

Army Substance Abuse Office

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When your teen is giving a party:

-Plan the party in advance with your teen so you know who is coming – this will help eliminate the "open party" situation.

-Set a time limit. Set a definite start and end time, not too long. Consider daytime parties as an alternative to evening ones or plan an activity such as swimming, skating or renting movies, and stick to the time limit.

-Agree to rules jointly ahead of time – These might include:

- No drugs, including alcohol
- No smoking
- No leaving the party and then returning
- No gate crashers allowed
- Lights should be left on
- Some rooms in your house are off limits

-Know your responsibilities. The responsible adult at a teenager's party is visible and aware. Remember, **it is illegal to serve drugs, including alcohol to minors**. You are legally responsible for anything that may happen to a minor who has been served drugs or alcohol in your home. Contact your local police department to inquire about your responsibilities.

-Have another parent or parents over that night – Other adults are company for you during a long evening and can be a help with problems. Also, if parents have driven teenagers to your house, you might consider inviting them in to meet you, however briefly.

When your teen is a guest:

-Call the host parent. Make sure that your basic ground rules, such as parental supervision and no alcohol, will be followed before you give consent to attend a party. If your teenager complains that you don't trust him or her,

explain that the issue is not one of trust, but rather an issue of parents agreeing to certain ground rules.

-Check the party plans beforehand with your teenager. Know where your child is going and with whom. When taking your teenager to a party, wait to see that he or she is inside the house. If you don't know the host parents, introduce yourself.

-Make it easy for your teenager to leave a party. If there is drinking or drug use or any reason that your teenager wishes to leave a party, make arrangements that your child can call you (or a designated adult) and you will come. Remind them NEVER EVER get into a car with someone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

-Be up to greet your teen when he or she comes home from a party. This is a great opportunity to discuss and share the evening.

For more information, contact the Army Substance Abuse Office at 245-4576.

Information provided by: Cumberland-Perry County Drug and Alcohol Commission.

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