

# TIPS FOR PARENTS ON UNDERAGE DRINKING



## STEP 1 Get the Facts

If your child or teen has a question about alcohol and you don't have the answer - that's OK. Why? Because [AskListenLearn.org](https://www.asklistenlearn.org) has developed proven strategies and resources for you to learn the facts, **start conversations**, and answer tough questions. However, some information is nice to have before you get started. Check out some of these facts before you chat with your kids.

### TipS!

- Age matters: drinking underage negatively affects brain development.
- Women and girls are affected even faster by alcohol because of the amount of water in their bodies.
- The smaller your build, the faster alcohol will affect you, and at lower amounts.
- Certain types of drinks contain a higher percentage of alcohol than others. While a standard glass of beer is taller than a standard glass of wine, they contain the same amount of alcohol.
- Drinking fast is extremely dangerous, because the body gets overwhelmed quickly, just as it does with other substances.

## STEP 2 Grab the Moment

How in the world do you talk to your kids about alcohol? It's not as hard as you think. You're rarely going to need say "let's sit down for a serious talk." The world will hand you chance after chance for these short conversations. Here are some situations that may arise:

### TipS!

- Seeing someone engaging in risky behavior
- Watching a commercial
- Hearing something on the news
- Having a holiday meal
- Planning a night out
- Enjoying a drink yourself

Grab the moment to start asking questions. That's right, asking, not talking first. Ask what they think, what they've heard, and what they've noticed. This will allow you to learn what your kids already know - and what they don't. Listen to their answers, and then add your own opinion. Sometimes the exchange will be that short. Sometimes it will go a little deeper. But start early - at the beginning of elementary school - and don't stop until they're grown. Remember, research shows that parents are the leading influence on their kids' decisions regarding alcohol. They're listening - even if you don't think they are.



To learn more about teaching units on the impacts of underage drinking and peer pressure, see additional lessons from *Ask, Listen, Learn*

[See all lessons](#)



For more info head to [AskListenLearn.org](https://www.asklistenlearn.org)

# TIPS FOR PARENTS ON UNDERAGE DRINKING

## STEP 3 Get the Facts

Kids ask questions, and sometimes it's hard to know what to say, especially when they ask about drinking alcohol. Here are some tips for answering those questions, and guiding those conversations.

**Preschoolers** need short answers to their questions about why they can't try your adult beverage: "Alcohol is bad for kids. It would be very dangerous."

**Elementary schoolers** are ready for more information about why you drink in moderation: "Any amount of alcohol is dangerous for a person under 21 because their brains are still developing. Adults should only drink within their limits, similar to how we should only eat unhealthy snacks within our limits."

## Parenting & Youth Development Expert



Respected parenting and youth development expert, Deborah Gilboa, MD, is the founder of AskDoctorG.com. Popularly known as Dr. G, her passion for raising kids with character makes her a favorite family physician, parenting expert, author, speaker and social influencer. A mom of four boys, she inspires audiences easy tools to develop crucial life skills in children ages 2-22. Doc G is a member of the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility's National Advisory Board.

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# DANGEROUS DRINKING BEHAVIOR



**Middle schoolers** can learn with you about why even the littlest bit of alcohol increases their risks of dangerous drinking behavior later on. Adults who had taken their first drink before the age of 15 were 7x more likely to experience alcohol problems than those who didn't start drinking before the age of 21 (SAMHSA, 2013).

**High schoolers** need help developing strategies to use in social situations when they don't want to drink but may feel self-conscious if they abstain. They will benefit from frank conversations about why they do or don't want to try drinking and what the risks are. Your teen needs boundaries and rules, as well as respectful conversations about their decision-making. Get more tips for high schoolers [here!](#)



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