

What Kids Can Say

Give your teenager the means, and the words, they need to say “no” to alcohol. Teens say they prefer quick “one-liners” that allow them to dodge a drink without making a big scene. It will probably work best for your teen to take the lead in thinking of comebacks to drink offers so that he or she will feel comfortable saying them. To get the brainstorming started, here are some simple pressure-busters:

1. “No thanks.”
2. “I don’t feel like it—do you have any pop?”
3. “I don’t drink.”
4. “My parents would kill me.”
5. “Why do you care whether I drink?”
6. “I’d get kicked off the team (club etc.).”

If you hear something you don’t like, try **NOT** to respond with **anger**.



TIPS for listening & talking with your teen

Developing open, trusting communication between you and your child is essential to helping your child avoid alcohol use. If your child feels comfortable

talking openly with you, you’ll have a greater chance of guiding him or her toward healthy decision making. Some ways to begin:

Encourage conversation. Encourage your child to talk about whatever interests him or her. Listen without interruption and give your child a chance to teach you something new. Your active listening paves the way for conversations about topics that concern you.

Ask open-ended questions. Encourage your teen to tell you how he or she thinks and feels about the issue you’re discussing. Avoid questions that have a simple “yes” or “no” answer.

Control your emotions. If you hear something you don’t like, try not to respond with anger. Instead, take a few deep breaths and acknowledge your feelings in a constructive way.

Make every conversation a positive experience. Don’t lecture or try to “score points” on your teen by showing how he or she is wrong. If you show respect for your child’s viewpoint, he or she will be more likely to listen to and respect yours.