

# STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS TO Prevent or Delay Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Your teen will be making decisions about using alcohol and other drugs.

**You play a key role.**

## LEARN

more about each strategy

## TAKE ACTION

with tips on how to make a difference



# THE SIX STRATEGIES

- 1 Know what's going on in your child's life
- 2 Develop open and regular communication
- 3 Set expectations and consequences together
- 4 Be a positive role model
- 5 Build a close and caring relationship
- 6 Don't provide alcohol or other drugs

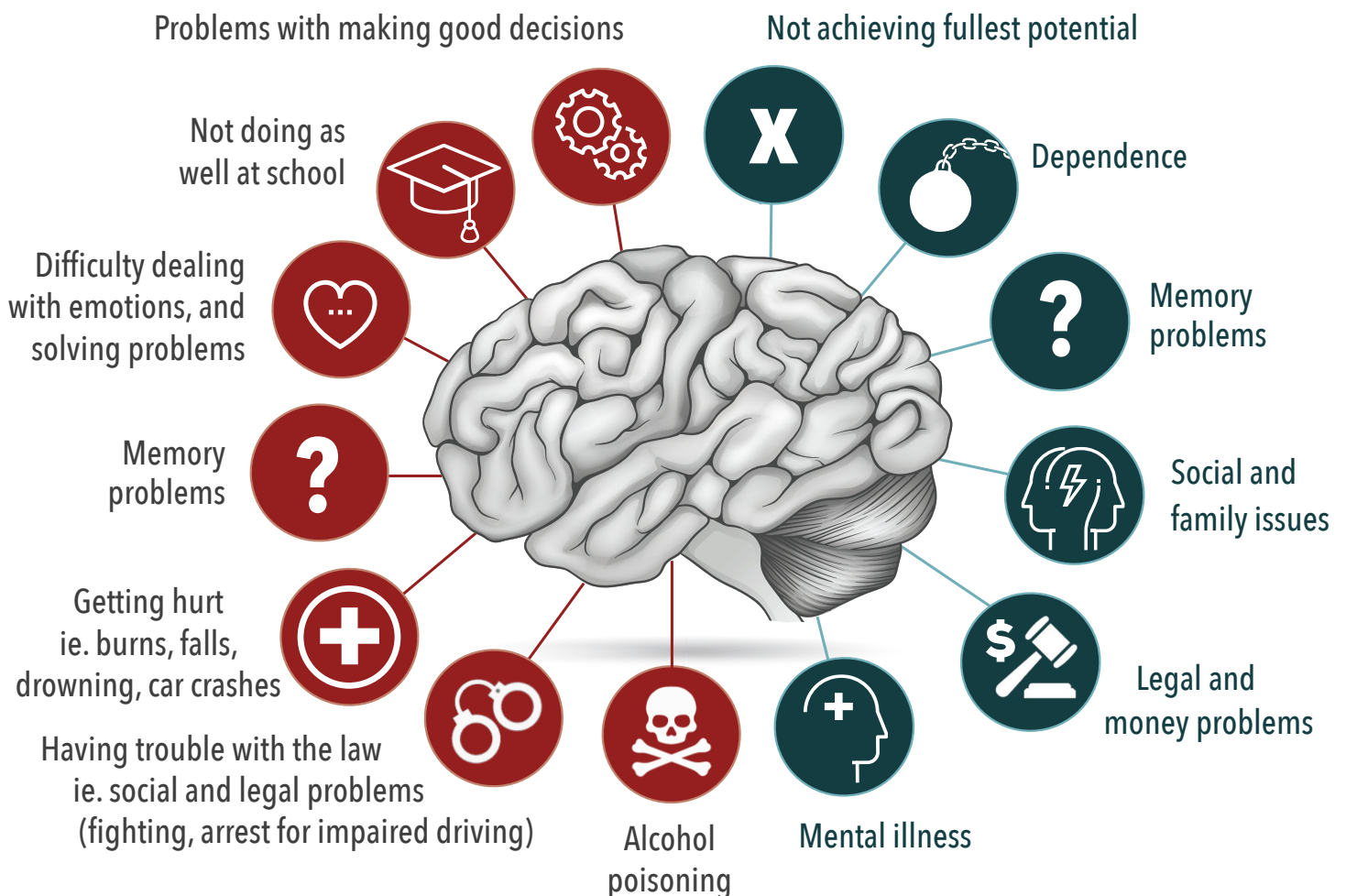
# Did you know?

- Nearly half of students in grades 7-12 do **NOT** use alcohol or other drugs
- Helping youth delay when they start using substances reduces risks
- Parents play a big role in teens' decision-making
- The number of students using alcohol, cannabis and other drugs increases with each grade
- Most parents do not give their child alcohol or other drugs

**Brain growth and development continues into the mid-twenties. Alcohol and other drug use can negatively affect this development.**

## SHORT TERM RISKS

## LONG TERM RISKS



# 1

## Know what's going on in your child's life

Know who your child is with, what they are doing, and where they are. If your child is going to use alcohol or other drugs, they tend to do it when adults are not around.

### TIPS:

- Agree on a curfew.
- If your child is going to a friend's house, ask if an adult will be home.
- Have your child check in while they are out.
- Know how your child is getting home.
- Get to know your child's friends and their parents.
- Talk to your child about the pros and cons of social media use.
- Balance your child's need for privacy with monitoring, and adjust as needed.
- Talk to your child about what to look for in a friend (e.g., honesty, kindness, and respect).

### REMEMBER:

- Being overly strict can cause your child to ignore the rules.
- Snooping through your teen's room and belongings breaks trust.

For more information

[www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca](http://www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca)

# 2

## Develop open and regular communication

Ongoing communication allows children and youth to talk with their parents about areas of interest or worries. Regular communication with your child helps delay alcohol and other drug use.

### TIPS:

- Talk early and often with your child.
- Make it a conversation (not just yes/no questions).
- Talk about immediate risks, and focus on safety.
- Ask your child about their thoughts on alcohol and other drugs.
- Stress the fact that many teens are not using.
- Discuss how alcohol and other drugs are shown and often glamorized in the media (movies, television and online).
- Explore ways to manage peer pressure.
- Be clear and specific about your expectations and rules around alcohol and other drug use.

### REMEMBER:

- Think about your body language and tone of voice.
- Know the facts. Be a reliable source of information.

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# 3

## Set expectations and consequences together

Setting clear expectations helps create an environment where rules are respected.

### TIPS:

- Set rules before your child is in the situation.
- Work together to create rules and consequences.
- Base these on the age and maturity of your child.
- Make sure you and your child have a clear understanding of what is expected.

### REMEMBER:

- Stay calm when following through with consequences.
- Be consistent and follow through right away with consequences.

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# 4

## Be a positive role model

Children are watching what you do as a parent and are influenced by what you say and do. Think about what message you are sending.

### TIPS:

- Show your child that you can have a good time without substances.
- When having people over, provide non-alcoholic drink options.
- Let your family and close friends know about the values you are teaching your child and ask them to model responsible behaviour.
- Show and talk about healthy ways to manage stress such as going for a walk after a busy day.
- Don't get drunk or high in front of your child.

### REMEMBER:

- How much and when a parent chooses to use alcohol or other drugs will affect your child's decisions about their own use.
- Children learn behaviours by observing adult role models including teachers, coaches, and older siblings.
- Don't make statements such as, "What a day! I need a drink!" or, "A drink will calm my nerves."



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# 5

## Build a close and caring relationship

A close, caring, supportive relationship can help delay when youth first try alcohol or other drugs.

### TIPS:

- Support your child to find their passions and interests.
- Be involved. Participate in activities that interest your child.
- Make time for your child. Spend one-on-one time together when possible.
- Remind your child often that you love them.
- Notice when your child makes good choices and praise them for their efforts and achievements.
- Encourage your child to discuss problems and concerns with you.
- Eat together, this sets the stage for good communication and sharing.



### REMEMBER:

- Build your child's confidence. Youth who have confidence and a positive attitude are more likely to make healthy choices.
- Respect their independence but stay connected at the same time.

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# 6

## Don't provide alcohol or other drugs

When parents make alcohol or other drugs available to teens, they put them at risk for alcohol or other drug-related harms.

### TIPS:

- Let your family and close friends know about the values you are teaching your teen and ask them to not provide alcohol or other drugs.
- Discuss with your teen your responsibility as a parent to protect them from alcohol and drug related harms and to follow the law.
- Keep your alcohol and other drugs locked and away.
- Establish alcohol and drug-free rules and expectations with your teen.
- Provide teens with fun activities that are substance-free.

### REMEMBER:

- Most parents don't provide alcohol to their teens. Research has found that teens who have alcohol provided by parents have a higher chance of alcohol-related problems later in life.
- Talk to older siblings about not providing access to alcohol or other drugs.
- As a parent, you are legally responsible for what goes on in your home, even if you don't know about it or aren't home.
- Talk to your teen about the legal age for substance use.
- Get help if your teen consistently breaks the rules. Seek support from a trusted friend, family member, counsellor, or family physician.
- Be supportive. Be ready to help your teen find healthier coping strategies if needed.



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