



Talking to your Teens about Alcohol

Alcohol is the nation's favourite drug. Most of us use it for enjoyment but for some it can become a serious problem. Alcohol costs society £2.7 billion a year in NHS costs and over £7 billion a year in crime costs! The cost relates to people who drink too much who are more likely to have fights, money troubles, family upsets, unprotected sex, mental health problems and accidents, just to name a few. It is our duty as parents to protect our future generation by educating young people about the consequences of drinking to excess.

Studies indicate that the majority of young people prefer to get the facts about alcohol direct from their parents. If you're preparing to talk to your kids about alcohol, it's best to start early when thinking about when to start talking to your child about alcohol. Children are likely to be curious and ask questions when and if they see you drinking. Rather than let them think that alcohol is something mysterious and to be kept secret, it's better to address any questions when they come up. This then will hopefully make them less curious to try it.

Your children might ask why you can drink but they can't. Make sure they know that alcohol is more dangerous for young bodies and there is no safe allowance for under 18s. The chief medical officer suggests that young people wait until they are 15 years old to drink in the home (supervised by a parent) as not all the child's organs have developed yet and this can therefore have an affect on their development.

Even though there are many long term problems associated with excessive drinking, young people are more interested in learning more about the short term implications. It is useful to talk about the effects alcohol will have on your child's appearance for example, how many calories in alcohol, poor skin and nails, and the effect it has on relationships such as falling out with friends or not being attractive to potential partners.

For more information about talking to your children about alcohol, visit www.eastleigh.gov.uk/alcohol