

TEENS, DRUGS & DRIVING

PARENTS. THE ANTI-DRUG.

Drugged driving, or driving under the influence of drugs, is a significant public health and public safety threat and may be a bigger issue than generally recognized. According to the first-ever analysis of drug involvement from National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) census, one in three motor vehicle fatalities (33 percent) with known drug test results tested positive for drugs in 2009.¹

New and young drivers are the most at-risk for crashes on the roads and are at risk for the most harmful effects of drug use. As teens take to the roads, parents can take action by talking about the dangers of drunk, drugged, and distracted driving. It's important that our youngest drivers learn how to drive safely and make healthy choices.

Below are the most recent teen driving and substance use trends.

THE FACTS

- ✓ Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for 15- to 19-year-olds in 2007.²
- ✓ More than six percent of 16 or 17 year olds and nearly 17 percent of 18 to 20 year olds reported driving under the influence of alcohol in the past year.³
- ✓ In a comprehensive study on unsafe driving by high school students, 30 percent of seniors reported driving after drinking heavily or using drugs, or riding in a car whose driver had been drinking heavily or using drugs, at least once in the prior two weeks.⁴

30%

Of high school seniors report driving, or riding in a car, after drinking heavily or using drugs

Nearly three quarters of students have consumed alcohol by the end of high school

3/4

- ✓ Nearly three quarters of students have consumed alcohol by the end of high school. More than half (54%) of 12th graders in 2010 report having been drunk at least once in their life and about half indicated they have tried an illicit drug with well over a third having used on one or more occasions in the prior 12 months.⁵
- ✓ Next to marijuana, prescription drugs are the most commonly abused drug by teens.⁶ The most commonly abused prescription drugs by teenagers include painkillers (e.g. Vicodin; OxyContin), tranquilizers, and stimulants (e.g. Adderall; Ritalin)
- ✓ In 2009, past month use of illicit drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol (including binge alcohol) was lower among youths aged 12 to 17 who reported that their parents always or sometimes engaged in monitoring behaviors than among youths whose parents "seldom" or "never" engaged in such behaviors.⁷

1 U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Traffic Safety Facts. Drug Involvement of Fatally Injured Drivers. November 2010 DOT HS 811 415.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (extracted June 2011). <http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcaus10.html>

3 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2010). Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Prevalence Estimates and Samples Sizes Table Types A, B, and N. Part 4 of 4. Rockville, MD.

4 O'Malley, P.M., and Johnston, L.D. Drugs and driving by American high school seniors, 2001-2006. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 68(6):834-842, 2007.

5 Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2011). Monitoring the Future national results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2010. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan. <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-overview2010.pdf>

6 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2010). Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Volume I. Summary of National Findings (Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-38A, HHS Publication No. SMA 10-4856Findings). Rockville, MD. <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k9NSDUH/2k9Results.htm#2.2>

7 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2010). Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Volume I. Summary of National Findings (Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-38A, HHS Publication No. SMA 10-4856Findings). Rockville, MD. <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k9NSDUH/2k9Results.htm>

Think it's harmless to

DRIVE HIGH?

**In 2009, 18% of drivers killed in a crash
tested positive for drugs.***

**Research shows that drugs affect
a driver's concentration, perception,
coordination, and reaction time.**

How's that for harmless?

Get the facts at abovetheinfluence.com



*Drug Involvement of Fatally Injured Drivers, U.S. DOT/NHTSA, November 2010.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING TEEN CRASHES



Getting a driver's license is an exciting and risky time for teens. The cause of many teenage crashes is often an issue of attitude and maturity. Parents and caregivers can help shape a responsible attitude about driving and take immediate steps to limit the potential dangers of teen driving.

1 Remember you are a role model.

New drivers learn a lot by example, so practice safe driving by obeying speed limits and demonstrating safe driving habits.

2 Supervise as much practice driving as possible for at least six months.

This will get a teen acclimated to the road before he or she takes a driving test to get a license. Let your teen drive in a wide variety of driving conditions to build experience and confidence.

3 Start out slow.

Start with slow moving traffic environments and gradually introduce your teen to more difficult driving situations such as highway driving, merge ramps and major urban areas. Parents need to assure their teens build up their experience before jumping into highway traffic.

4 Require that your teenager wear safety belts at all times – no exceptions.

If you wear your safety belt every time you drive, your son or daughter may adopt this behavior more readily.

5 Make sure your teen is aware of potential safety issues as well as how to respond to safety or emergency situations.

Keep a highway safety kit in the trunk of your teen's vehicle and review with them how to use its resources.

6 Be clear that teens should never use their cell phones or text while they are driving.

If it is necessary to use a cell phone, instruct your teenager to pull safely over to the side of the road to make an emergency call.

7 Limit nighttime driving.

Many teen car crashes take place between 9 p.m. and 12 a.m. so it's best for beginning drivers to be restricted to driving during the day initially, and gradually be introduced to night driving as they gain experience.

8 Limit the number of passengers allowed in the car when your teen is driving.

Having more passengers in a car increases the chance of greater risk-taking, primarily because of greater peer pressure and more distractions.

9 Discuss realistic consequences of drug and alcohol use.

Remind them that it is illegal for teens to drink alcohol – and illegal for anyone to use illicit drugs. Discuss how drugs and alcohol can impair their senses, affect perception, and cause delayed reaction time. It's important to note that even one drink or joint can impact the senses, as can prescription drugs taken with a physician's order. Make it clear that alcohol, marijuana or other drug use when driving is completely unacceptable.

10 Choose safe vehicles for your teenagers.

Look for automobiles with high safety ratings (air bags, crumple zones, etc.) and review federal statistics and consumer-report literature to help evaluate the safety rating of a vehicle.

PARENTS.
THE ANTI-DRUG.

For more information, visit:
www.theantidrug.com/resources/impaired-driving.aspx

TIPS FOR DRIVING “ABOVE THE INFLUENCE”



A POSITIVE ATTITUDE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Many teen crashes aren't caused by a lack of skills or knowledge but by attitude and maturity. Be sure to develop and practice a responsible driving attitude.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.

Work with your parents to get plenty of supervised practice for at least six months before you take the driver's license test – consider asking them to establish a set practice schedule with you. Practice driving in different conditions so you know what to expect in inclement weather, heavy traffic, urban and rural situations and night driving. Ask your parents what tips they have for handling these situations. The more experience you have prior to your driving test the more confident you will feel behind the wheel.



UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF DRIVING “ABOVE THE INFLUENCE” OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.

Drinking alcohol or using drugs when driving is totally unacceptable. Not only is it dangerous, it's also illegal and can cost you your license. Just one drink or one joint causes a chemical effect on the brain that can impair the senses and affect judgment and reaction time. Prescription drugs taken with a physician's order might also affect your senses so be aware of any potential side effects before getting behind the wheel and never take a drug that wasn't prescribed for you.



LIMIT THE NUMBER OF RIDERS.

Limit the number of friends you drive in your car if you're a new driver. Your risk of a fatal crash increases with each additional passenger and overcrowding your car can leave riders without seatbelts.



DRIVE WHILE THE SUN IS UP.

Stick to daytime driving when you first get started. Your risk of a fatal crash is three times higher at night per mile driven.



TAKE IT SLOW.

Save the highway and other fast-moving, heavy traffic situations until you've had plenty of supervised practice. Gradually take on more difficult driving situations – such as merge ramps, major urban areas and rush-hour – once you're more comfortable with your driving capabilities. Don't forget, speeding is the #1 reason new drivers lose control of their vehicles.



TIME FOR STORMY WEATHER.

Rainstorms, snow, sleet and ice can create scary and dangerous driving conditions, even more so for inexperienced drivers. Get as much supervised practice on the road during poor weather conditions as you can.



STOW AWAY THE CELL PHONE.

Talking or texting on your cell phone while you're driving is a dangerous activity. If it's necessary to use your phone, pull safely over to the side of the road before even picking it up.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RIDE.

Talk with your parents about what family vehicle you will drive. Larger cars with fully equipped safety features such as airbags and anti-lock brakes will offer better protection in a crash. Seatbelts come standard in all vehicles and save thousands of lives each year. Plus, a majority of states have seatbelt laws that require drivers and passengers to buckle up. Play it safe – wear a seatbelt every time you get in the car and save your cash for something other than tickets.



abovetheinfluence.com