



**Griswold
SAFE
HOMES
Network**

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ALCOHOL



Common arguments from your children and answers that make sense

QUESTION: *What's the big deal? Beer or wine coolers won't hurt me as much as liquor.*

REPLY: Alcohol is alcohol. Regular servings of beer and wine coolers contain the same amount of alcohol as a glass of "regular" wine or a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor. They all have the same effect.

QUESTION: *What's wrong with kids drinking?*

REPLY: Your brain is not fully developed until age 25. A young person who has had just two drinks is ten times more likely to have a car crash than an adult who has had two drinks. Kids who drink get lower grades and are less likely to finish school. Alcohol affects concentration, coordination, and development. This not only hurts your grades, but also keeps you from doing your best at sports, music, art, or whatever else it is you like to do.

QUESTION: *It's okay for you to drink, so why can't I?*

REPLY: First, using a drug like alcohol is a privilege, which comes with being an adult. There are many things you can do at your age that you would consider dangerous for a child younger than you. In the same way, using alcohol at your age is dangerous for you. You are still developing physically, socially, and emotionally. Second, it is illegal for you to drink alcohol. You could face many consequences as a result of drinking as a minor—both physically and judicially. The risks are just too great for a child to fully comprehend. As a parent, it is my job to help you mature into a responsible, healthy adult who respects the law.

QUESTION: *Since I don't drive yet, I don't have to worry about having my license suspended, so what's the problem?*

REPLY: Because you are under 21, it is against the law for you to drink alcohol. If you are caught drinking, possessing, trying to buy alcohol, lying about your age, using a fake ID to purchase alcohol, or transporting alcohol before you are 21, you will face serious trouble. Penalties include fines, loss of driving privileges, and jail time. For those under 16, the loss of driving privileges begins when applying for the permit.

QUESTION: *Everybody my age drinks. If I don't drink, I'll lose my friends.*

REPLY: More and more kids your age are choosing to be alcohol-free, but the perception many students have—that everyone drinks—is a myth. Besides, a real friend won't pressure you to do anything you don't want to do, especially something dangerous. Your real friends—the ones that want the best for you—will stand by your decision not to drink. Maybe they would be happy to have someone support them in their decision to be alcohol-free, too.

QUESTION: *Wouldn't you rather I drink than take drugs?*

REPLY: Alcohol is a drug! Recent studies have shown that the heavier the alcohol use, the more likely it is that the heavier use of other drugs will also be an issue. Consuming alcohol when using other drugs can multiply the effects of those drugs and have disastrous outcomes—even accidental death (overdose).