

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING  
**PARENT HANDBOOK FOR**  
TALKING WITH TEENS ABOUT ALCOHOL

**POWER of  
PARENTS**

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## SHORT-TERM THINKING

The teen brain focuses on what's happening right now. When a teen thinks ahead, it usually means he or she is wondering about what to do this weekend, not next year. That's why your son or daughter isn't terribly concerned about the future. This puts teens at a disadvantage when they face choices about risky behaviors that can have long-term consequences, such as drinking.

### When It Comes to Alcohol

Teens may know the potential risks of drinking, but think, "My friend drinks and nothing bad has ever happened." That friend's experience can have more impact than facts. Do not assume that giving information or statistics is enough to convince your teen not to drink alcohol.

Teens believe, "Nothing bad will happen to me." They assume negative things happen to others, not to them.

### The Bottom Line

Adults may hold beliefs and have thoughts that simply do not exist for teens.

Help your teen develop better thinking skills by talking together about the short-term and long-term consequences of alcohol use, even if he or she shows little interest.

## Risky Business

Because teens are still developing, they take more risks with alcohol. They act impulsively and don't recognize that their actions, such as drinking, have consequences.

*Alcohol is especially attractive to teens because it reduces their social anxiety more than it does for adults.*

