

Know! Sexual Assault Prevention Tips for Teens



The following Know! Tip discusses subject matter that some parents and teachers may feel uncomfortable reading about, specifically regarding sexual assault. If you, or someone you know, has been sexually assaulted and want to talk, the National Sexual Assault Hotline is a free and confidential resource where counselors are available 24/7. You can reach the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673).

In the previous tip, we discussed the complex connection between [alcohol and sexual assault](#), and the importance of having regular and ongoing conversations on this topic with our sons and daughters. It must be made clear to them that alcohol is NEVER an acceptable excuse for sexual assault, but that alcohol is the substance used most frequently to [assist in](#) sexual assault.

Young people need to know that when alcohol is consumed, [it makes it more difficult to:](#)

- Think clearly
- Set limits and make good choices
- Think about long-term consequences and control impulses
- Determine when a situation is dangerous
- Say “no” to sexual advances
- Fight back if a sexual assault occurs

It is also important for children to be aware that alcohol can cause a person (possibly themselves) to blackout and experience memory loss.

In no way are we suggesting that by being alcohol-free, your child is safe from becoming a victim (or perpetrator) of sexual assault. However, having a clear mind and full coordination skills is beneficial in avoiding or escaping a potentially dangerous situation.

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act against or without someone’s consent. Legally, the definition of consent varies by state, and you should review your state’s definition and share it with your teen. Overall, consent is about communication. For the safety of both partners, consent needs to be given verbally every time, and especially when sexual contact increases or changes. And sex with anyone mentally or physically incapable of giving consent—including someone who is intoxicated—is rape.



[Click here to print this article and start talking with your child.](#)

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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at preventionactionalliance.org

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According to the experts at RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), this is specifically what our daughters and sons should be hearing from us on the topic:

- When it comes to sexual assault, a victim will more than likely know the perpetrator. It may be a dating partner, or it may be an acquaintance.
- While it may feel awkward or embarrassing, it is important to discuss and set boundaries with a dating partner. You are in charge of your body and your partner is in charge of his or her body.
- You can ALWAYS say no to a kiss, a touch, or whatever, even if you said yes before.
- When a person says NO, respect their answer—period. And if you tell someone no, expect for them to respect it—no explanation needed.
- It is NEVER okay to pressure someone to do something they do not want to do.
- You should NEVER feel obligated to do more with someone than you feel right or comfortable to do.
- If someone is pressuring you to go further than you want, do whatever you need to exit the scene as quickly as possible. Say you have to use the restroom, say you aren't feeling well—just remove yourself from the situation. It may feel uncomfortable to have to make a quick exit, but that is the other person's fault, not yours.
- Trust your gut. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Again, excuse or remove yourself from the situation without delay.
- When at peer gatherings, be sure to stick closely with your trusted friends, and make a pact to keep an eye out for each other. If plans change, as they sometimes do, and you are not comfortable with them, call or text me and I will be there to get you home safely. *This is also a good time to make sure that you and your teen have an emergency X-it strategy.*
- I am firmly against you drinking underage. If however, you find yourself in a situation that involves drinking on your part or a friend's, I want you to call or text me and I will be there for you.
- If you ever are in a situation that you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or where things have gone too far with another person, you call or text me and I will be there for you right away.
- If you see someone else that appears to be at risk for sexual assault—intervene. If it is a dangerous situation, call or get help. Regardless, I want you to look out for yourself and for others.

Research shows that our teens are listening to and respecting the advice we, as parents, give—especially on delicate yet important subjects such as this. It is our responsibility, no matter how uncomfortable the conversation might feel at the time, to provide this information to our children, to allow them to ask questions, to give them the opportunity to share their feelings, and to let them know that we are ALWAYS here for them.

For additional information on sexual assault, visit <https://www.rainn.org/>.

Sources: [Child Lures Prevention – Think First and Stay Safe. Teen Lures TV Newscast curriculum, for Grades 7-12.](#) [RAINN \(Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network\): Safety for Students.](#) [Katie Smith, Your Teen Magazine for Parents: Using Current Events As An Opportunity For Education On Sexual Assault.](#)