

Know! What's Happening at Those Friday Night Football Games

It's Friday night, you drop your teen off at the high school football game to meet up with her friends. You are not naïve; you know that among some of your daughter's peers, there is likely to be drinking that occurs before or after the game. But not your child, you've covered your bases. Not only did you drop your daughter off at the entrance and watched her walk in, you instructed her not to leave the stadium until you return to pick her up following the game. Plus, there are plenty of adults looking on from the bleachers and walking to and from the concession stand during the game.

You're doing great, but did you warn your child about the 7-Eleven Slurpees?

What harm is there in a Slurpee you ask? Aside from the high-sugar content and typical brain-freeze, not much, until vodka or other alcohol is added to the mix. It has become a Friday night ritual among some teens; stopping by 7-Eleven on the way to the game, grabbing giant Slurpees, spiking them with alcohol and then walking around sipping on them, undetected by adults. This is happening with Gatorade and other bottled drinks brought into the stadium as well. Just when you thought you had your bases covered...

So what is a parent to do now?

1. Advocate for your local high school to create a policy restricting outside drinks from being brought into the stadium (if there is not already one in place).
2. Warn your son or daughter that Slurpees and other drinks offered to them may be spiked, as some teens may find it amusing to try to get an unsuspecting peer or even a preteen to unintentionally drink alcohol. Tell children to stick to their own drinks.
3. Keep track of your child during the game. If you are physically present, have your child check in with you at a predetermined time (like halftime, or the end of each quarter); and be sure to take the "scenic route" to the concession stand or restroom. If you are not at the game, randomly check in with your son or daughter by exchanging text messages or by giving your child a call (with the condition he/she has to answer at any given time).
4. Know the impact of alcohol on adolescents and share the facts with your child, reminding him/her of your stance against underage drinking and the consequences if he/she so chooses to partake.
5. Above all, engage in regular, on-going and open conversations with your child (about the everyday stuff, as well as the heavier issues, like alcohol and other drugs).

Whether it's a spiked Slurpee at a football game or some other alcoholic beverage at a different place and time, your child is likely to be offered a drink at some point. Encourage your child to find his/her personal motivation for being alcohol-free, then practice saying "no." Your child may attribute it to academics, sports, friendships, appearance, health or simply not wanting to disappoint you. Regardless, your child will feel better-equipped and more confident in saying 'no' if he/she has thought about it and practiced ahead of time.

The idea of sneaking alcohol into a football stadium is nothing new, and even when protective measures have been taken, there will be those who find a way around it. You are encouraged to take the above precautions and stay up-to-date on what's happening in your child's world, but more than anything, talk early and often with your son or daughter to educate and empower him/her – because in the end, it is up to your child to make the right choice.

For information on the impact of alcohol on the behavior, body and mind of adolescents, [CLICK HERE](#).