

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF MID-COAST MAINE AND BEYOND

**The Times Record****Register for Fall!**  
Choose from over 100 Degrees & Certificates.Call for an  
advising appointment.  
207-442-7736[Click for weather forecast](#)

2014-04-10 / Commentary

## Talking with your kids about risky behaviors

BY JENNAH GODO



Along with the warmer weather, spring marks the start of celebration season. Spring flings, proms, graduations, and BBQs will be ramping up over the next several weeks. Occasionally these special celebrations include increased exposure to alcohol and possibly illegal drug use, sometimes in excess. Although an important topic all year round, this time of year is a critical time to talk to your

children about risky behaviors.

Being mindful of the possibilities and situations that could affect your child is in the best interest of his or her health and safety. No parent wants to receive the dreaded phone call from a child, a parent, or the police reporting his or her child was driving under the influence, injured or hurt, arrested, or the victim of sexual assault. As parents, we should also be concerned about the situations that might not be shared with us, the unprotected sex, the risqué texts, the hurtful arguments. These are potential and very real consequences can happen as a result of drug or alcohol use.

Having conversations with your prom-goer or graduate before they begin celebrating can give them the tools to avoid the unintended consequences of risky behaviors. Talking about these risks will better prepare them to make smarter decisions and avoid that regret or sorrow that may occur. Having the often tough or uncomfortable conversation with your child can be hard, but necessary and part of being an aware, involved, and thoughtful parent.

Here are some suggestions for things to discuss with your child:

- Discuss your child's plans for the evening and share your expectations
- Clearly agree on what time your child is expected to come home
- Make sure your child understands that you want him or her to be safe
- Present clear NO-USE messages regarding underage drinking
  - Provide facts about the potential dangers of drinking
- Discuss how alcohol and drugs can affect decisions about sex, driving, and other choices
- Set a clear rule about not getting into a vehicle with someone who has been drinking or using drugs
- Talk about consent to sexual activity and that "No Means No"
- Provide them with safe, healthy and fun alternatives for these celebrations
- Tell them you will be available during the night if they get in a situation and they need your help (even if they know you wouldn't approve) and check-in with them periodically
- Let them know you will be up when they come home at night to make sure they get in safely (and to check their eyes and breath!)
- Continue talking with (not at) your child about the social pressure they may face to drink or try a drug, offer skills to resist the pressure, and have an open door for dialogue when the issue arises

Let your child know that there local resources available in case they or a friend need a supportive adult to talk to.

Lastly, if you hear a rumor of an underage drinking party, let the parent know, and stop the party before it happens.




JENNAH GODO is the School Health Liaison with Access Health, the local Healthy Maine Partnership.

Find nearby stories



News Bayou

[Return to top](#)

Share / Save    



Facebook social plugin

Copyright 2011-2014 The Times Record, All Rights Reserved



**Newspaper web site content management software and services**

[DMCA Notices](#)