



## **A PARENTS' GUIDE TO TEENAGE HOLIDAY PARTIES**

A Message from Putnam Communities That Care Coalition

As parents, we know the importance of our teen's social life and that parties are a way to socialize and relax. But an unsupervised or poorly planned party can result in unwanted or even tragic consequences. Parent accountability is the key. Today, many teens drink alcohol to "ease stress", while others use alcohol because they "enjoy the feeling of being drunk". As parents, one of the most important things we can do is to be a positive role model for our children. Communication and honesty practiced in your home is a positive step to your child's safety. It cannot be stressed enough that teens whose parents talk to them regularly about drugs & alcohol are 42% less likely to use those substances than those students whose parents do not!

REMEMBER, the #1 place teens say they get their alcohol from is their home and the #1 place they drink alcohol is at other people's homes.

***For more information go to [putnamncadd.org/blog](http://putnamncadd.org/blog) or follow us on FaceBook@ Putnam Communities that Care Coalition***

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## As parents of teenagers attending a party...

- Know where your teen will be and for how long he/she will be there.
- Contact the parent of the party-giver. Confirm that a parent/adult will be home and supervising the party. Make certain that no alcohol will be served. Offer assistance.
- Know how your teen will be getting to and from the party.
- Discuss how your teen would handle a situation where alcohol was available at a party.
- Make sure your teen knows what time he/she is expected home.
- If your teen is staying overnight at a friend's house after the party, verify with the friend's parents that your child will be staying over and that they will be home.

## As parents who are hosting a party for your teen...

- Set ground rules before the party.
- Decide what part of the house will be used for the party.
- Limit party attendance and times.
- Have plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks available.
- Make sure at least one and preferably several parents-adults are present.
- Do not allow party guests to come and go.
- Avoid easy access to alcohol in your home. If necessary, lock up your liquor.
- Notify the parent of any teen who arrives drunk.

## What is a parent's liability for hosting a teenage party where alcohol is present?

**CRIMINAL:** If a parent hosting a party allows a teen to bring alcohol into their home or provides alcohol to a teen, that parent has committed the crime of unlawfully dealing with a child, a class A misdemeanor. If convicted, the sentence ranges from one year in county jail to a three-year probationary sentence, fines and/or conditional release.

That parent can also be charged with the Social Host Law, which is has been enacted in every town and village in the County. This law only requires that the parent know of the party and that teens are drinking alcohol. This, too, is a class A misdemeanor and can result in a fine plus response recovery costs (a parent is liable for the expense of the response by a public agency or agencies to the incident; which can run into thousands of dollars)

**CIVIL:** A criminal conviction can place restrictions on your freedom and give you a permanent record. But the consequences of your actions do not end there. Your civil liability of hosting an underage drinking party can be costly. Under civil law, you can be held liable for any damage caused by a teen who has become intoxicated at the party you are hosting, if you know alcohol is being served, or if you provide alcohol at the party. If an individual dies as a result of an intoxicated minor, you could face a wrongful death cause of action. **SIMPLY PUT, YOU COULD LOSE EVERYTHING!**