

Prom: Frequently Asked Questions

1) How do I talk to them about alcohol and drugs?

Look for opportunities to start the conversation in current events, social media postings or news articles.

- Know the facts
- Ask about concerns, worries or questions
- Plan the main points you want to discuss
- *Respect youth are experts in their own culture and listen to their opinion*
- Focus on facts rather than emotions
- Recognize that experimentation and mistakes happen
- Watch 3rd video of Have That Talk series
www.youtube.com/haveTHATtalk

2) Am I liable if there is underage drinking at my house?

This is true, parents could be held responsible for allowing underage drinking in their home or on their property. There's a possibility that they may be investigated or even charged for criminal negligence. There's also the risk that they may be liable for civil action if there is injury or even death to a minor stemming from alcohol or drug use on their property. Parents need to remember that it is illegal in Ontario for youth under the age of 19 to purchase, possess, consume, or handle alcohol.

3) If they've taken alcohol or drugs, can they consent to sexual activity?

The law states that the person has to be ABLE to give consent. This means that they have to be awake, conscious and sober enough to make a clear decision.

- You can only consent for yourself
- People in positions of trust, power or authority can't abuse their position to get sexual activity.
- If you imply no through your words or behaviors that's just as good as saying "NO".
- You have the right to change your mind and stop anytime for any reason during sexual activity

4) How do I talk about the risks of being in a car with a driver who's under the influence?

Youth often believe that cannabis makes them a better driver; and that it is safer than driving drunk.

- Cannabis has the same effect as alcohol on reflexes, coordination, judgement and concentration.
- It is illegal to drive under the influence of cannabis.
- Make sure your youth has a plan to get home if they're going to a party
- Discuss having an "exit strategy" with them. This means making an agreement that they can call or text you at any time that evening if they need to be picked up - no questions asked.
- You may have heard of the "x-plan": youth text the letter X to someone they trust (parents, siblings, family members) and that person will call to say "something has come up and I need to come get you right now". This allows for the youth to leave the situation with a valid excuse

5) Is my teen's school involved in the prom or not? How do I find that out?

- Have a discussion with your teen and their school. Schools who are involved with organizing prom will likely send home forms and information
- Check the school website and call or email the school for information
- The school's involvement will vary depending on the school. Some schools won't be involved at all; while other schools will have the school staff help organize a prom dinner and dance. After proms may be planned by an outside company or by students and volunteers

6) Did you know that most proms go from 6:30pm-10pm? Have you talked to your teen about the plans for before and after prom?

- Your teen will likely have a prom dinner and dance. These events usually run from 6:30pm-10:00pm at a specific venue
- Your teen and family members may also be invited to a before prom event. These may be referred to as "garden parties" or "pre prom". This is usually held at someone's house who has offered to host
- Your teen may also be attending an after prom party. The location for these parties will vary
- Talk to your teen about their plans. Ask how they will be getting to and from the different parties and venues. Remind them that attending an event while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol may result in being denied entry. Prom happens once in a lifetime, remind them to make it memorable for the right reasons!

7) What are the risks with mixing alcohol and drugs?

- Alcohol and drugs changes the way someone thinks, acts and feels. People may take more risks and do things that they normally wouldn't do. This could lead to bad decisions and regret
- Mixing alcohol and other drugs could intensify the effects and the person could become severely intoxicated
- Mixing alcohol with other drugs puts the person at higher risk of overdose
- For more information: <http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/drugs.aspx>

8) What are the most common police interventions that happen around prom?

- When intoxicating substances are used around prom the big concern and incidents that can occur are overdose, non-consensual sex and violent offences such as assault and threats.