

Parental messages that stress no alcohol do get through, survey finds

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92 percent of teens who said parents opposed underage drinking weren't drinkers, MADD says.

(HealthDay)—Making it clear to your teen that underage drinking is unacceptable is a highly effective way to reduce the risk that he or she will use alcohol, a new survey shows.

The online poll included 663 U.S. high school students who were asked if their [parents](#) approved of underage drinking.

Only 8 percent of the [teens](#) who said their parents thought underage drinking was unacceptable were active drinkers. This compared with 42 percent among those whose parents believed underage drinking was somewhat unacceptable, somewhat acceptable or completely acceptable.

The results show that teens whose parents tell them that underage drinking is completely unacceptable are more than 80 percent less likely

to drink than teens whose parents give them other messages about underage drinking, according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

The group released the survey Tuesday as part of Alcohol Awareness Month and in advance of prom and graduation season.

"Decades of research show that there is no safe way to 'teach' teens how to drink responsibly," Robert Turrisi, a professor and researcher at Pennsylvania State University, said in a MADD news release.

"A clear no-use message is the most effective way for parents to help keep teens safe from the many dangers associated with underage alcohol use. This issue is too important to leave to chance and hope for the best," he added.

Turrisi helped MADD develop free 30-minute online workshops that will be held nationwide on April 21 as part of the fourth annual PowerTalk 21, which is a day for parents to talk to their teens about not drinking until age 21.

Before then, MADD will offer 21 days of underage drinking prevention activities across the country.

"MADD's 21 days of activities across the country culminate with our first-ever Power of Parents online sessions," MADD National President Jan Withers said in the news release. "It's undeniable the influence parents have on their teens' behavior. Our kids are listening; but what parents say and how they say it makes all the difference."

Each year, [underage drinking](#) results in the deaths of about 4,700 people in the United States.

Research shows that teens who don't drink until age 21 are: more than 80 percent less likely to abuse alcohol or become alcohol-dependent later in life than those who drink before age 15; 70 percent less likely to drive drunk later in life than those who drink before age 14; 85 percent less likely to be involved in an alcohol-related traffic crash later in life than those who drink before age 14; more than 90 percent less likely to be injured while under the influence of [alcohol](#) later in life than those who drink before age 15, and 90 percent less likely to be in a fight after drinking later in life than those who drink before age 15.

More information: Here's where you can learn about [MADD's PowerTalk 21](#).

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