

Graduation and Prom: Celebrating Safely



Spring is full of exciting events: prom and graduation being major highlights. Unfortunately, what is supposed to be a happy time can end in tragedy. During these celebrations it is more likely for underage youth to consume alcohol. In 2001, 2,950 children under the age of 21 died in alcohol related accidents in the US and over 1/3 of these accidents occurred during the months of April, May and June - which are all around the time of graduation and prom.ⁱ Utah is not immune to this problem – in 2009 there were five fatalitiesⁱⁱ caused by underage drinking and driving and 18.2% of Utah teens report drinking in the last 30 days.ⁱⁱⁱ

Teens + drinking = disaster. Car accidents are the leading cause of fatalities among teenagers and according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, “people who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become dependent on alcohol, than those who wait until age 21”^{iv}

What can students and parents do to stay safe during this exciting time?

- Parents and teens - communicate regularly about expectations regarding drugs and alcohol and what the consequences are in your family.
- Parents - get involved with supervision of special events and make sure you know your children’s friends and where they hang out.
- Find out the start and end time of parties.
- Parents should never provide drugs or alcohol to teenagers and their friends.
- Host a alcohol-free graduation party of your own or attend an after-graduation party hosted by your high school.

Get involved and let's keep spring a healthy, happy, and safe season. For more detailed information on addressing this issue in your community visit:

http://www.ilsadd.org/Think_About_It_Prom_and_Graduation.pdf

ⁱ <http://www.teendrugabuse.org/alcohol/drunk-driving-graduation-season/>

ⁱⁱ NHTSA/FARS

ⁱⁱⁱ CDC Youth Behavior Risk Surveillance System (YRBS), 2009, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?LID=UT>

^{iv} *Alcohol Alert*, January 2006 (67), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIH, Dept. of HHS, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa67/aa67.htm>.

Brought to
you by:



utah county
health department
“creating healthy communities”

www.UtahCountyHealth.org
www.facebook.com/uhealth
www.twitter.com/uchd