

SPRING BREAK SAFETY TIPS

Spring break is one of the most important times of the year for high school teens. It can be a time to relax, draw closer to friends and make lifelong memories, but it is also a time where teens are more likely to participate in risky behavior. Teen girls are even more likely to participate in risky behavior during this time of year.

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, one in seven high school students under the age of 18 take unsupervised trips during Spring Break. It is recommended that no students go on unchaperoned trips. If your child goes with other parents as chaperones, be sure those parents hold the same expectations and values for teen behavior as you do. These students are not the only ones at risk, though. Teens who stay at home are often unsupervised by parents or teachers and are therefore more likely to use marijuana, cigarettes and alcohol.

Keeping your teen safe during Spring Break can be easier than you think. Here are a few tips to help you keep your teen safe during Spring Break:

1. SET RULES, ESPECIALLY NO DRINKING OR DRUG USE

- Explain that Spring Break does not mean a break from responsibility. Be clear about your expectations and the consequences for breaking the rules.
- Talk candidly about the risks of drug use and drinking, including alcohol poisoning, violence, STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and sexual assault. For parents with daughters, include a conversation about date rape drugs. These drugs can be put into alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, so be sure she opens her drinks herself and does not leave them unattended.
- Establish your values beyond a doubt. Kids can be very literal, so it is important that you clearly say, “I am against alcohol for people under 21 because.....” and then explain why.

2. PREPARE YOUR TEEN

- Stress the use of a buddy system. Three or more is recommended.
- If your teen is traveling, make sure they know the laws in the areas they are traveling to.
- Walk through peer pressure scenarios. Give them ways to tell their peers no, without making them feel “uncool.”

3. KEEP UP COMMUNICATION

- Know where your teen is staying and the activities he/she has planned.
- If your teen is staying at home, know how he/she is spending his/her unsupervised time.
- Require a daily check in via phone call and ask questions. If your teen is traveling, make sure you have phone numbers for his/her friends as well.
- Network with other parents. Compare plans and coordinate rules with other parents.