

DRUGS

Seventh to Ninth Grade

Instructions

- **STEP 1:** Point out the immediate, displeasing consequences of tobacco and marijuana use, such as bad breath and stained teeth.
- **STEP 2:** Begin to help your preteen distinguish drug myths from realities, i.e.: "Marijuana isn't harmful because it comes from a plant and is 'all natural."
- **STEP 3:** Explain, in this instance, for example, that marijuana smoke can contain higher concentrations of the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco.
- **STEP 4:** Remind your preteen of the health risks associated with smoking, namely lung cancer and emphysema.
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- **STEP 5:** Explain to your preteen of the risks of heavy drinking, such as car crashes and liver damage.
- **STEP 6:** Discuss other long-term effects of drugs and alcohol, such as a loss of social and emotional skills, as well addiction, brain coma and death.

Teaching your preteen to avoid drugs starts with straightforward discussion about drugs. The National Drug Council recommends the following age-specific guidelines for talking about drugs.

Fourth to Sixth Grade

Instructions

- **STEP 1:** Explain that drugs are especially dangerous for growing bodies.
- **STEP 2:** Discuss the immediate effects of alcohol, tobacco and drugs on different parts of the body: tobacco makes you lightheaded, alcohol weakens your coordination.
- **STEP 3:** Point out the long-term consequences of drug use, including drug addiction.
- **STEP 4:** Talk about how alcohol and drugs hurt not only the user but also the user's family and friends.
- **STEP 5:** Brainstorm potential scenarios in which friends offer your child drugs, and rehearse possible responses or excuses.
- **STEP 6:** Warn your child about how drugs and alcohol are promoted in advertisements, movies, television shows and music.
- **STEP 7:** Get to know your children's friends and their interests, as well as their parents.
- **STEP 8:** Work with other parents to reinforce one another's efforts to keep your children drug free.

How to Encourage your
Preteen to Avoid Drugs