

# Ten Top Tips



## When dealing with drugs and teens

Parents! Concerned about drugs and your teenager? Here are ten tips you could find useful.

1. **Be open to discussion** with your teen about the issues involved in drug use. Make time to talk with your teen and encourage a positive and supportive atmosphere.
2. **Be prepared and informed.** Parents often exaggerate the dangers of drugs due to their own fear and concern. Present your teen with honest and factual information.
3. **Don't be judgmental** when talking about drugs with your teen. If your teen feels defensive, he or she will not want to discuss these important issues with you.
4. **Don't panic** if you discover that your teen is using or experimenting with drugs. The calmer and more prepared you are, the more productive your communication will be with each other.
5. **You can't stop your teenagers from using drugs**, but you can influence them to make safe and sensible decisions for themselves.
6. **Listen to their point-of-view** and let them know your concerns. Don't expect your teen to make decisions on the spot about what position they will take regarding drugs.
7. **Accept that your teen will make mistakes.** Teens may experiment with drugs and other risk-taking behaviour as a normal part of adolescent development. Mistakes can be an opportunity for learning if they are handled the right way.
8. **Make a Safety Plan with your teen.** Ask them questions about how they can keep themselves safe and make appropriate decisions in relation to drug use.
9. **Set clear boundaries and consequences** in relation to drugs and your teen. Think about the message you want your teen to receive about these issues and let that guide you.
10. **Consult your teen** about drug issues and the boundaries you want in place. You will find they are more likely to stick to any agreement you make and to talk to you when problems arise if they are consulted about the issues that affect them.

For information about drugs and drug use, or for support for teenagers with drug problems and their families, refer to the following metropolitan agencies:

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service 9442 5000 Free call 1800 198 024 (for country callers)
- Holyoake 9416 4444
- Palmerston Drug Rehabilitation (Perth) 9328 7355

