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The thought of teen parties may strike fear in the hearts of parents. Yet, with planning and forethought, teen parties can be safe and fun.

Parties at your home

Suggestions for when your teen gives a party:

- Have your teen draw up a list of invitees: Remember that large parties can easily get out of hand
- Consider the party's location: A large outdoor party might be difficult to control
- Help your teen decide how to issue invitations. They should state the party is not an "open house"
- Discuss food, beverages, and activities. Be sure to lock up any liquor or valuable items
- Work out a plan for "gate crashers" and greet teens as they arrive
- Specify no alcohol or other drugs. Have guests check their backpacks at the door
- Tell your teen ahead of time that parents will be called if anyone is caught with illegal substances, including alcohol and never let them drive – you could be liable if an accident occurs
- Settle on the ending time of the party beforehand

Parties away from home

Suggestions for attending:

- When your teen gets invited to a party, ask where it is, including the address, how your teen is getting there and back, who will be there, what he or she will be doing, and the hours of the party
- Call the parents to make sure they will be home – even though your teen won't want you to
- Stress to your teen that if plans change, he or she need to let you know
- Rehearse what your teen should do if he or she wants to leave. Encourage him or her to call you for a ride if needed
- Remind your teen never to ride with anyone who has been drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Stay up until your teen comes home or tell him or her to wake you when they arrive
- Be suspicious if your teen frequently sleeps elsewhere after a party

Parents need to plan carefully if they are concerned about what will happen when they are away from home. Reconsider your plans if there is potential for a party. Ask a close relative or neighbor to keep an eye on things. Have your teen stay with another trusted family while you are gone.