



Drugged Driving

The Facts

At age sixteen, most teens are anxious to hit the open road and start driving. On the other hand, parents focus their concern on their child's safety. Driving properly, obeying safety laws and most importantly, not drinking and driving, are all on the top of the list of parental safety concerns. But what about drugs and driving?

Intoxication in regards to drugs impairs one's ability equally, if not more than drinking. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that in 2002, illegal drugs were consumed by 10 to 22 percent of all drivers in vehicle crashes that year. For the last twenty years our society has successfully tackled the issue of drinking and driving by making it a national issue. In fact, according to *Parent. The Anti-Drug*, it has been reported that drunk driving fatalities has dropped from 18,444 in 1982 to 10,959 in 1998. This remarkable outcome illustrates how public attention to a threatening vice can bring out change in our society and among our families and youth.

Effects of Drugs

From illegal drugs to everyday medications, one can be impaired and incapable of driving based off of their side effects. Just like alcohol, drugs alter one's sensory functions and perceptions. Illegal, over-the-counter and prescription drugs affect people in different ways. One may become drowsy, confused, unaware of their surrounding environment, hyper, slow in reaction time, have a change in their depth perception and have their peripheral vision altered. All of these changes deal with the way a person reacts, concentrates, coordinates and perceives; which as a whole are all important in driving safely. Most importantly drugs can affect the health and life of anyone involved with them.

Talk about the Issues of Drugs & Driving

When it comes to driving it is risky to gamble with one's judgment and perception. As a parent it is important to illustrate how drugs and driving are two issues that should not be looked at as a game.



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When it comes to driving it is risky to gamble with one's judgment and perception. As a parent it is important to illustrate how drugs and driving are two issues that should not be looked at as a game.

Here are a few helpful hints provided by *Parent. The Anti-Drug*:

- Make sure drugged driving is part of any conversation you have when you talk about the dangers of drinking and driving.
- Discuss the physical effects that using marijuana and other drugs can have, like making it difficult to judge distances and react to signals and sounds on the road.
- Remind them to never get into a car with someone who has been using drugs or drinking. Tell them to call you so you can pick them up.
- Be a better listener. Ask questions – and encourage them. Paraphrase what your child says to you. Ask for their input about family decisions. Showing your willingness to listen will make your child feel more comfortable about opening up to you.
- Use TV reports, anti-drug commercials, school discussions about drugs, or the Web site www.theantidrug.com to help you introduce the subject in a natural, unforced way.
- Don't be afraid to ask where your kids are going, who they'll be with and what they'll be doing. Get to know your kid's friends – and their parents – so you are familiar with their activities.
- Know your community. Get involved in community activities and your local coalitions. Visit www.helpyourcommunity.org to find your local community coalition.
- Build a network of adults you can talk with about school safety issues and alcohol and drug use. Substance abuse should be every parent's concern.
- Familiarize yourself with how drug education is being taught in your child's school.

Adapted from:
Parents. The Anti-Drug:
“Talking with you teen about drugs and driving”

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Produced by
PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP) (800) 457-2736
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