

# All Teens are At-Risk for Alcohol and Drug Use

Why the Primary Care Provider is Having the Discussion with Your Teen Now

## Why Should Teens be Screened for Alcohol and Drug Use?

**Even a few positive words from a provider can delay initiation of alcohol use by teens.**

Brains continue to develop until age 25, which means alcohol and drug use has higher health risks for young people. The earlier youth start using alcohol and/or drugs the greater the likelihood they will become addicted.

- About 50% of youth who begin drinking before age 15 will become dependent.
- 1 out of 6 people who start using marijuana as a teen become addicted.
- 1 in 7 Cumberland County high school students report having abused a prescription drug. When misused, prescription drugs can be addictive and put users at serious risk.

### How are Teens Screened and What Will My Provider Tell Me?

Providers use a screening tool called the CRAFFT. Most often practitioners cannot disclose what is discussed with their patients. Make sure you learn the office's confidentiality and consent policy. More information on CRAFFT, how it is scored, and what the results mean are on the back of this sheet.

## What Can I Do as a Parent?

**Youth who learn about the risks of alcohol and drugs from their parents are 50% less likely to use substances.**

**1.** Talk often with your teens about expectations they do not use alcohol and drugs and why. **2.** Set clear rules and consequences regarding alcohol and drug use. **3.** Make sure teens do not have access to alcohol and drugs in your home. **4.** Create a community of support. Talk with other parents to make sure alcohol and drugs aren't available to teens in their homes.

### What Education and Treatment Services are Available?

**If your teen is using, support them in seeking care and provide social supports, both inside and outside the home.**

**Student Intervention and Referral Program (SIRP)** – Contact: Heather Drake, Public Health Program, Substance Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator, [heather.drake@opportunityalliance.org](mailto:heather.drake@opportunityalliance.org) | **Maine Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services** Program and Services Directory: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/osa/help/directory.htm>

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**Together we will prevent**

**youth alcohol**

**drug use.**



# How are Teens Screened for Alcohol and Drug Use?

## The provider will ask:

### During the past 12 months, did you:

1. Drink any alcohol (more than a few sips?)
2. Smoke any marijuana or hashish?
3. Use anything else to get high ("anything else" includes illegal drugs, over the counter and prescription drugs, and things that you sniff or huff)

— If no to all —➔

The provider will reinforce positive behaviors and ask **Car** question:

**C** = Have you ever ridden in a **Car** driven by someone who was high or had been using alcohol or drugs?

— If yes to Car —➔

The provider will discuss the risks and consequences associated with riding with those under the influence and help identify alternative strategies and a plan.

— If yes, then the provider uses **CRAFFT**:

The CRAFFT is an evidence-based screening tool recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Abuse for use with youth under age 21. The purpose is to screen youth for alcohol and other drug use disorders and assess whether a more in depth conversation about use is needed.

### Administer CRAFFT:

- C** = Have you ever ridden in a **Car** driven by someone (including yourself) who was high or had been using alcohol or drugs?
- R** = Do you ever use alcohol or drugs to **Relax**, feel better about yourself, or fit in?
- A** = Do you ever use alcohol or drugs while you are by yourself, **Alone**?
- F** = Do you ever **Forget** things you did while using alcohol or drugs?
- F** = Do your **Family or Friends** ever tell you that you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?
- T** = Have you ever gotten into **Trouble** while you were using alcohol or drugs?

— If score is 0 or 1 —➔

The provider will talk briefly with the patient about the risks and consequences of use and express their concern and advise them to stop use. The provider will follow-up at the next visit.

— If score is 2+, the provider will discuss use patterns, any associated problems, and attempts to quit: —➔

If there are no signs of acute danger or addiction, the provider will engage in a brief negotiated interview to stop or cut down use. S/he will give advice, create a plan, and follow-up.

If there are signs of addiction (score 2+ for 14 years or younger, daily use, score 5+, or blackouts), the provider will refer the patient to treatment and discuss inviting parents to participate in a discussion of recommendations.

If there are signs of acute danger (hospitalization, combining substances, consuming lethal amounts, driving after use) the provider will make an immediate intervention and consider breaking confidentiality.