

May, 2000

Teen Parties

It's graduation and prom season - is your teen planning to have a party? As a parent, hosting parties in your home has its advantages. You know where your kids are and that they are properly supervised. You get to know your teen's friends better. And it's nice for your teen to feel that their friends are welcome.

Here are some pointers if your teen is hosting a party **in your home**:

- **Keep it small** - have your teen make a list of who is invited.
- **No crashers allowed** - make it clear that if too many kids show up, you'll close the party down.
- **Set an ending time** - decide with your teen when the party will be over. This helps you inform other parents and provides some control.
- **Guests should stay** - teens who leave and return may have a drink or illegal substance stashed elsewhere.
- **Be a "presence"** - your teen will vote no on your constant presence, but you can keep an eye on things by floating in and out to replenish snacks or bring in more soda.
- **No alcohol, no drugs.** Set a clear policy up front. Be aware that you are legally responsible if minors are served alcoholic beverages.

What if your teen is going to a party **at someone else's home**? Calling a parent you don't know to check things out can be awkward. Try calling to offer to help or provide food. If they didn't know about the party - they do now! And if they do, they will appreciate your offer. Talk to other parents who know the family if you don't.

Be very specific with your teen about when the party ends and their transportation plans. Remind your teen never to ride with someone who is drinking, then work out alternative plans such as calling home for a ride. Be awake or wake up when your child comes home. It's a great time to visit with your teen about what's going on with them. Even if they don't want to talk they know you are aware of when and in what condition they arrived home.

adapted from "Work & Family Life", April, 1998

Inside This Issue . . .

- ✓ How does your teen view her body?
- ✓ Is your teen stressed?
- ✓ Can you control your teen?
- ✓ How do you talk to a teen?
- ✓ Why do teen girls need to worry about osteoporosis

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

It's no wonder that teen girls don't feel good about their bodies. Consider these statistics:

90% of all girls ages 3-11 have a Barbie doll, an early role model with a body shape that is unattainable in real life. Women's looks are emphasized far more than men's. Turn on TV! Twenty years ago fashion models weighed 8% less than the average female of that time. Today,

models weigh 23% less than the average female.

The average model is 5'10", 111 lbs.

The number one magic wish for girls 11-17 years old is to be thinner.

Teaching and Learning magazine reported that by age 13, 80% of all girls have dieted. On any given day in America, 56% of our women are on a diet.

Body image is your perception of your size, shape, and appearance, and how you feel about your body image greatly affects your self-esteem. Teens who struggle with body image are more likely to develop eating disorders. As parents, you can help your teen develop a healthy body image:

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Stress Management for Teens

1. De-emphasize physical appearance in how you describe or evaluate yourself and others.
2. Insist that your children exercise at least five times a week. Start by setting a good example!
3. Don't put your children on diets! Buy *healthy* foods. Teach them about healthy eating habits.
4. Limit television viewing! TV promotes sedentary lifestyles, and "*lookism*", and junk foods.
5. Discuss media's "model" stereotypes and the suggestion that appearance is a person's most important quality. Teach a healthy skepticism about media messages and advertising.

(Source: "This is Your Life! By Barbara Storper, MS,RD and FOODPLAY Productions)

"How can you be stressed? You don't have anything to worry about," I overheard a parent say to his 13-year-old daughter as she frantically gathered her things after a school activity.

Perhaps her dad was comparing her seemingly insignificant worries to what he believes is stress in his life; we perceive events differently. No

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Q: Why are teen **girls** the focus of **osteoporosis prevention education**?

A: Osteoporosis is 4 times more common among females than among males, affecting one out of every two American women after age 65. During teen years, almost **one-half** of the adult skeleton is developed, and the process is completed by age 30. **Currently, less than 15% of teenage girls have adequate calcium intakes.** Think of the impact on bone development!

Soda pop has replaced milk as the preferred beverage of teens. The situation is becoming critical! Parents and schools can help by placing more emphasis on the importance of calcium to health. Many teens have easy access to vending machine sodas throughout the school day. Although vending machines are in schools to create revenue, is selling out our kid's future health worth it?

have stress of some kind and the first step to help deal with it is recognition of what it is and what can be done.

Stress can cause...

- Low energy
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Irritability
- Distance from peers
- Exhaustion
- Crying
- Muscle aches
- Headaches
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Distance from family
- Loss of sense of humor

What causes stress?

- Fear of failure
- Not fitting in
- Competing with siblings
- Upcoming tests
- Too many options
- Too much to do
- A gap between your ideal self and who you really are

Things to do to manage stress:

- Take time to have fun.
- Reward yourself for completing projects.
- Keep a calendar of important events.
- Manage your time.

- Set priorities.
- Learn to say “no.”
- Maintain a to do list.
- Exercise.
- Stay Organized.
- Get in shape and stay in shape.
- Eat well.
- Learn relaxation skills.
- Build supportive relationships.
- Laugh.

Adapted from University of Minnesota.

Controlling Your Teenager

If you already have a teenager, you laughed at the title of this article because you know that controlling a teenager is imperfect. Controlling teenagers is hard; often you don't win. Yet rules and control are absolutely necessary.

Whether you realize it or not, your teenager hears your voice in their head and they hear the rules. However, they are also experiencing freedom and the beginnings of adulthood; they want to think and do for themselves. State the rules; make sure your teens know the rules. It is up to you, not the teen, to change the rule; don't be afraid to change a rule if necessary.

Once rules are established, most teenagers will avoid flagrant disobedience. They prefer to be devious. This is when their lying is at its best. Teenagers do not mind disobeying, they just do not want their parents to know about it! Because of this, you need to remember that the primary rule in combating teenage deception is that any rule must be stated as clearly as possible. The more clear you are in the beginning, the more you can pin them down, and the better control you will exert. The less room they have in which to maneuver and disobey, the less likely that they will.

Talkin' to Teens

How can you maintain a civil relationship with your teen while encouraging responsibility and independent decision-making? They still see you as important, whether they act like it or not! Be a positive role model and provide support as needed.

Listen to your teen. Ask open ended questions like, "What was the worst thing that happened today" and "What was the best thing that happened today?"

Tuck them in at night. No joke! Teens will often talk in the dark about things they won't discuss in the daylight. Every so often, tuck your teen in bed and lay down on the floor next to the bed and ask some questions to get them started.

Don't laugh or discount their feelings. If they complain or "hate" someone, acknowledge the feeling and ask how they would change the situation. None of us can control how we feel, but we can control what we do with the feeling.

Quit nagging your teenager! Teenagers are old enough to get up with an alarm clock and get ready on time. Save your voice and lower your blood pressure by allowing them to be responsible for their consequences.

Build a relationship of trust and never lie. Make sure your teen knows that you are there for anything, from drug usage to teen pregnancy. Be there for them.