

TIPS FOR TEENS

Even when you are confident in your decision not to use drugs or alcohol, it can be hard when it's your friend who is offering.

A lot of times, a simple "no thanks" may be enough. But sometimes it's not. It can get intense, especially if the people who want you to join in on a bad idea feel judged. If you're all being "stupid" together, then they feel less self-conscious and don't need to take all the responsibility.

But knowing they are just trying to save face doesn't end the pressure, so here are a few tips that may come in handy.

1. If you're on a sports team, you can say you are staying healthy to maximize your athletic performance—besides, no one would argue that a hangover would help you play your best.
2. No thanks – I don't feel like being poisoned today
3. Why would I want to make myself stupid?!
4. I have to [study for a big test / go to a concert / visit my grandmother / babysit / march in a parade, etc.]. I can't do that after a night of drinking/drugs."
5. Keep a bottled drink like a soda or iced tea with you to drink at parties. People will be less likely to pressure you to drink alcohol if you're already drinking something. If they still offer you something, just say "I'm covered."
6. Find something to do so that you look busy. Get up and dance. Offer to DJ.
7. When all else fails...blame your parents. They won't mind! Explain that your parents are really strict, or that they will check up on you when you get home.
8. If your friends aren't having it—then it's a good time to find the door. Nobody wants to leave the party or their friends, but if your friends won't let you party without drugs, then it's not going to be fun for you.
9. What I find interesting, is the people who have healthy thinking and want healthy bodies, need to excuse themselves to those who are weak-minded and have to follow-the-crowds. Stand up for who you are. Nice, but firm. Who cares what they think. If they don't hang out with you, they are not genuine friends. Find groups that do constructive things.
10. When I hung out with friends who were smoking marijuana and they passed it to me I would just pass it on and say that marijuana makes me forgetful and I needed to get all A's in my Calculus and Chemistry classes to get into medical school. And guess what? It paid off!
11. Sometimes these situations totally surprise us. But sometimes we know that the party we are going to has alcohol or that people plan to do drugs at a concert. These are the times when asking yourself what you could do differently is key to not having to go through this weekend after weekend.

