



AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Making prom memorable: pointers for parents

Prom is an emotional milestone for teens and parents alike. Students look forward to celebrating well into the night and making memories to last a lifetime before saying goodbye to friends and heading off to college. Parents cherish seeing how much their child has grown.

With prom come many adult choices for teens, some of which have real effects on their health. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers the following advice for parents of prom-going teens:

- Exclude tanning beds from pre-prom preparations. They cause premature skin aging and skin cancer. Offer sunless tanning alternatives, such as lotions or professional spray tans.
- Know your teen's itinerary for the entire evening and with whom he/she will be with. Talk with friends' parents.
- Discuss drugs and alcohol with your teen; 42% of youths who talk with parents regularly about substance abuse will just say no.
- Know your teen's mode of transportation. Automobile crashes are the leading cause of death for those ages 15-20 years. Teens and their friends can take a pledge on the Students Against Drunk Driving Web site to have a sober prom: www.sadd.org/campaign/pdf/prompledges.pdf.
- Think long and hard when planning to host an after-prom party. Teens often expect alcohol and marijuana at parties, according to the AAP, and parents should not

offer it. Adults can be held criminally or civilly liable for illegal substance use in their home, whether they provide it or not.

- Talk with your teen about sexual pressures he or she may face well before prom. Girls can be asked to phone home at some point during the evening, giving them an "out" if they need it, according to the AAP book, *Caring for Your Teenager*.
- Decide on an appropriate curfew. Exceptions can be made following a special event like prom, but no later than 2 a.m. is the general norm for teens over age 17, according to the AAP.

Finally, the AAP advises parents to let their teens know that if they find themselves in a jam, they will be picked up at any time, anywhere, no questions asked.

For more teen party tips, access www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/pages/A-Parents-Guide-To-Teen-Parties.aspx.

— Trisha Koriath



©2011 American Academy of Pediatrics. This information may be freely copied and distributed with proper attribution.