



Parents Are Heroes

A Newsletter of the Making Sobriety Attractive (MSA) Program

Newsletter Date

August 1, 2008,

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Ten Benefits of Frequent Family Dinners

The more often teens eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use other drugs. Compared to kids who have fewer than three family dinners per week, **children and teens who have frequent family dinners are:**

1. At 70 percent lower risk for substance abuse
2. Half as likely to try cigarettes
3. Half as likely to be daily cigarette smokers
4. Half as likely to try marijuana
5. One third less likely to try alcohol
6. Half as likely to get drunk monthly
7. Likelier to get better grades in school
8. Less likely to have friends who drink alcohol and use marijuana
9. Likelier to have parents who take responsibility for teen drug use
10. Almost 40 percent likelier to say that they will never use illegal drugs.

From: The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University's report *The Importance of Family Dinners*

THE RECIPE FOR RAISING DRUG FREE KIDS: FREQUENT FAMILY DINNERS

If you want your kids NOT to smoke, drink, use marijuana or other drugs, a simple but effective strategy is to have *dinner with them three or more evenings per week*. (The benefits of these dinners are outlined in the sidebar to the left.)

In order to remind us why family dinners are so important, the MSA Program and our sponsoring Coalition* are supporting the nation-wide celebration of *Family Day—A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children™* on **September 22, 2008**. A variety of supermarkets, restaurants, and community organizations in Kent County will also be supporting the event. Keep an eye out for coupons and specials that will help you and your family enjoy this national event.

MSA Program research proves that kids whose parents tell them not to use alcohol and other drugs (AOD) are less likely to, even if they don't get to have family dinners every night.

Seven Family Dining Do's for Parents

1. Start the pattern of family dinners when children are young.
2. Use Sunday as the day to pick several nights during the upcoming week when the entire family can eat together. Make your best attempt to stick to the schedule.
3. Encourage your children to create menu ideas and participate in meal preparation.
4. Turn off the TV and let your answering machine take care of your incoming calls.
5. Talk about what happened in everyone's day: school, work, extracurricular activities, or current events.
6. Establish a routine to start and end each meal. Light candles or tell a story at the start of the meal; eat dessert or play a board game after dinner to continue the conversation.
7. Keep conversation positive and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

PLUS #8: Tell your kids why you disapprove of the use of AOD, including illegal use of prescription drugs to get high or try to improve concentration. You can use information from the *Parents Are Heroes Newsletter* to get you started.**

** Students who "borrow" others ADD/ADHD medicine do no better in school than those who do not use. Also, prescription drugs cause more deaths than illicit drugs.

www.cadca.org/CoalitionsOnline/article.asp?id=1901; Learn more from [Special Drug Report on Prescription Drug](#)

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For more information
www.CASAFamilyDay.org

Link to a Web page:
Press Ctrl and Click:

[FTC Campaign to Help Prevent Teen Drinking During Summer Months](#)

[Report Finds Treatment and ER Admissions For Teen Marijuana Use Up Sharply](#)

[Special Drug Report on Prescription Drug](#)

New Nationwide Report Estimates that 40 Percent of Underage Drinkers Received Free Alcohol from Adults Over 21
www.stopalcoholabuse.gov

Who are we?
The MSA Project is Sponsored by the Kent County SA Prevention Leadership Coalition* and Implemented by the ALERT Labs (Alcohol [and other drugs] Laboratories for Education, Research, and Training) Group.*
MSA is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through SAMHSA's "Drug Free Communities Support Program:" see www.alertlabs.org

To send us Questions, Suggestions, and Comments, click on info@alertlabs.org

MSA PROJECT SUCCEEDING - FEWER TEENS USE DRUGS AT MSA SCHOOLS

We'll soon be reporting on all the *positive changes* that the MSA evaluator* found in the 2008 evaluation of the program. Since 2006, we've collected thousands of high school student surveys and hundreds of parent surveys.

For now, here are some student survey highlights:

In one or more high schools that have had two full years of MSA programming:

Alcohol use dropped by 19% Marijuana went down by 14%
Tobacco use fell by 28% Use of other illegal drugs was reduced by 55.6%

One of our objectives is for students to report that their parents would strongly disapprove of them using alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs. In one school alone, we saw an increase of 117% in the number of students who said that their parents would disapprove of them using tobacco.

Teens are also less likely to use AOD if they believe their friends disapprove of using. The number of students who said that their friends disapproved increased by 32% for alcohol, 34% for marijuana, and 17% for tobacco.

It's important that *parents* know that the majority of students do NOT use AOD:

<u>2008 Composite of Schools w/ 2-Years of MSA Programming</u>	
<u>Substances</u>	<u>Percent who did NOT use in the past 30 days</u>
Alcohol	62.8%
Tobacco	76.5%
Marijuana	75.3%
Other Drugs	94.2%

Did You Know?

New Casa* Report Finds Most Web Sites Selling Prescription Opioids, Stimulants And Depressants Require No Prescription ["You've Got Drugs!" V: Prescription Drug Pushers on the Internet](#) . Despite a decline in the number of Web sites advertising or selling controlled prescription drugs, like OxyContin and Valium, Xanax and Vicodin, Ritalin and Adderall, in the past year, 85 percent of Web sites selling such drugs do not require a prescription. Make sure your kids know that these drugs are highly addictive and deadly when misused.

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