



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



ParentUp Video Shows and Tells How to Talk About Alcohol

Celebrate National Public Health Week April 3-9

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BURLINGTON – A YouTube video, “Talking with Your Middle Schooler” is one of a series created by the Vermont Department of Health to build confidence and empower parents to start a dialogue with their child about alcohol use.

The video, part of the ParentUp campaign, will be available on the Health Department website and YouTube channel later this month.

Nearly 20 percent of children try alcohol before the age of 13. Young people who drink before age 14 are seven times more likely to develop an addiction to alcohol. The video acknowledges that talking to a middle-school age child about alcohol use can be uncomfortable, but it can also be an excellent opportunity for parents to show support for their child and offer advice.

“The earlier you talk about alcohol with your child, the better,” said Breena Holmes, MD, maternal and child health director for the Health Department, who offers advice for parents as part of the video. “The sooner you discuss the effects of alcohol, the easier it will be to build a relationship where ongoing discussions are encouraged and can regularly take place.”

The lasting impact alcohol can have on a young, developing brain and the importance of avoiding addiction are two messages that were well received by high school students when Dr. Holmes was a health educator in Middlebury. When the developing brain is exposed to alcohol it can interfere with memory and make it harder to perform important functions.

“Our overall message to parents is – ‘We know it can be a difficult discussion to initiate, but you can and should do it,’” Dr. Holmes said.

ParentUp supports 29 Vermont community coalitions and is funded by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration and the Department of Justice.

Other titles in the video series are: Talking With Your Teen about Alcohol: Warning Signs: and Underage Drinking Risks For Parents.

For more information on about the ParentUp campaign go to ParentUpVT.org or http://healthvermont.gov/adap/underage_drinking/index.aspx, or dial 211.

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