



North Central District Health Department

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April is National Alcohol Awareness Month *NCDHD Encourages Residents to Talk to Their Kids*

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month. The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. ([NCADD](#)) has sponsored Alcohol Awareness Month since April 1987. The focus is to increase public awareness and understanding, reduce stigma and encourage local communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol-related issues. This year's theme is "Talk Early, Talk Often: Parents Can Make a Difference in Teen Alcohol Use." The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) joins NCADD in promoting alcohol awareness this month. NCDHD encourages parents to talk to their children about alcohol use.

"Parents can make a difference in alcohol use simply by talking to their children," said Patrice Sulik, NCDHD Director of Health. "For adolescent children, drinking is the drug of choice. Parents can be proactive. NCDHD encourages parents to talk to their children about alcohol, the effects of alcohol, and how to say no."

Adolescence is a time for risk taking. It's a time of insecurity and low self-esteem. A time to prove yourself to your friends for fear of being left behind. It is easy for an adolescent child to forget drinking can be dangerous-both to themselves and to society.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), increase risk of health problems are associated with excessive alcohol use, including underage drinking and binge drinking (drinking 5 or more drinks on an occasion for men or 4 or more drinks on an occasion for women).

Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:

- School problems, such as higher absence or poor or failing grades
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities
- Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk
- Physical and sexual assault
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide
- Abuse of other drugs.

NCDHD board member, Maria Whelden of East Windsor, states, “It is so important to help your child make smart decisions about alcohol and drugs. Parents can help kids learn to resist negative peer pressure and become a positive influence on friends. Talk to your kids today!”

For more information on child development and positive parenting tips visit the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/pdfs/young-teen-12-14-w-npa.pdf>.

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About NCDHD

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) serves the communities of Enfield, East Windsor, Ellington, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks. NCDHD is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. NCDHD provides professional public health services in the areas of health education and disease prevention, environmental health and emergency preparedness. The mission of NCDHD is to prevent disease,

injury, and disability by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public and our environment.

For more information about NCDHD visit www.ncdhd.org.