

# Prevention Through Connection



*Promoting Health & Wellness through prevention in our Community*

## Keeping Prom & Graduation Season Memorable for Everyone

Prom and graduation are exciting times for parents and guardians as well as their teens. It can also be a stressful time for parents who want to ensure their teens safety. Here are some practical tips for adults and teens to help make these celebrations both safe and memorable.

Many parents put in a lot of work to make their teen's prom and graduation celebrations a memorable experience. Unfortunately, some adults may have a more relaxed attitude around underage drinking and sometimes even allow it in their homes, especially around prom or graduation parties. Parents may feel they have little to worry about as long as their kids aren't driving but underage drinking is never safe.



These events are key opportunities to reinforce expectations around alcohol and substance use. Your teen may be feeling more independent with college looming so it's important for you as parents or guardians to help them successfully navigate these milestone celebrations and the potential for peer pressure that come along with those celebrations.

The fact is that parents and caregivers really can help teens stay safe by being better prepared. Keeping the lines of communication open between you and your teen can help build feelings of trust. In many student surveys, kids say their parents are the biggest influence on whether or not they choose to drink or use other substances.



### Safety Tips for Parents

- Remember that you are the biggest influence on your teen.
- Set clear rules about not drinking, and discuss the consequences for breaking them.
- Offer to plan, host, or supervise a graduation party and assure parents the party will be alcohol-free.
- If your teen is invited to a family-hosted party, connect with the host parents about supervision and confirm alcohol will not be available.
- If possible, encourage driving arrangements of a limo or older sibling to reduce the possibility of distracted driving.
- Remind your teen that if they're in an uncomfortable situation, you'll pick them up, no questions asked.
- Discuss "quick" check-in calls or texts during the event to make sure they're having fun — and feeling safe.

### Safety Tips for Graduates and Teens Going to Prom

- Never drink and drive! Do not get into a car with a driver who has been drinking or using substances.
- Remember you can always say "no" and don't have to do anything you do not want to do.
- If it doesn't feel safe, it probably isn't. Trust your instincts.
- Watch out for friends and have them do the same for you.
- Don't hesitate to call your parents or a trusted adult if you're in an uncomfortable situation.

*This season is a wonderful time for you and your teen to celebrate and keeping it safe will ensure it remains memorable for all.*

## Youth Ambassadors in Action

Community service can start at a young age and Warren Prevention Coalition's Youth Ambassador Group are proof of that. Currently, there are 12 students participating from Kickemuit Middle School who, with supervision, are helping make their school and the community a better place.

This past February, the Youth Ambassadors took part in a sock collection campaign, bringing in over 400 pairs to be distributed to local organizations supporting the unhoused and those in recovery. Students also placed socks in plastic zip lock bags to help unhoused individuals have a way to keep socks dry when the weather outside is rainy.

Another effort the Ambassadors are part of focuses on fellow students at KMS who do not have food security. The students prep bags of snacks to be given to their schoolmates before they head home for weekends or school breaks. Food insecurity is when a household lacks consistent access to enough food for all members to live healthy, active lives.

### Why I am a Youth Ambassador:

*I decided to join the Warren Prevention Youth Ambassadors Group because I wanted to help others. I wanted to prevent my classmates from getting addicted or even trying drugs like alcohol and cannabis. I wanted to do this by giving the limelight to the terrible side effects of these drugs. To show my classmates what can happen if you even try these drugs. As the famous F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, "First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes you."*

*If you or a friend is struggling with drug abuse or if you want someone to talk to please, don't hesitate to go to guidance, there is always someone to talk to.*

– Alex B., 8th grade student at Kickemuit Middle School



*Youth Ambassadors from Kickemuit Middle School helped in the collection of 400 pairs of socks to be distributed throughout our community. Recipient organizations included Crossroads and East Bay Recovery's outreach to encampments of the unhoused.*

## Rhode Island's Social Host Law is There for Safety



During the Spring and Summer months adults and teens alike look forward to celebrations like prom, graduation parties, outdoor activities like boating, camping and concerts. Many times there is alcohol present so adults are reminded to never to serve alcohol to minors or allow underage drinking. ***It's not only unsafe, it's illegal!***

### What is the Social Host Law?

The primary purpose of the Social Host Law (RI General Laws 3-8-11.1) is to prevent against underage drinking parties or gatherings where adults knowingly allow minors to drink alcohol, whether or not they provide it. Additionally, if a minor consumes alcohol, even without your knowledge or consent, you can still be held accountable.

### What Are the Penalties?

**First Offense:** Any person over 18 years old who violates the law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.

**Second and subsequent offenses:** Any person who violates the law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$1,000, a term of imprisonment not to exceed one year, or both.

You may be required to make restitution or incur criminal charges if someone is hurt, suffers alcohol poisoning, or is killed as a result of drinking alcohol on your property.

*If you are hosting a party, please don't provide or allow underage alcohol use on your property. Adults providing alcohol to minors are not only breaking the law but are putting young lives at risk.*

## Sober Boating is Safe Boating

Boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not only dangerous, it's illegal! Alcohol use is the leading contributor to recreational boating fatalities.

**Alcohol can impair a boater's balance, judgement, vision and coordination.** Alcohol use is dangerous for passengers too. Intoxication can cause slips, falls over board and other dangerous accidents out on the water.

**BUI Enforcement** The U.S. Coast Guard standard for determining if a boat operator is intoxicated is when the person's manner, disposition, speech, movement, appearance or behavior appears impaired by observation and/or through the administration of a chemical test.

If you operate a boat under the influence, the vessel may be impounded, the operator may be arrested, face fines or jail time or lose their boating privileges.

**Boating Responsibly** Many Rhode Islanders will be looking forward to this year's recreational boating season. While time out on the water may be full of fun and leisure, the number one priority for every boater should be safety. Make sure you are prepared for any possible situation while out on the water.

### Before You Go

- Complete a Boating Safety Course
- Do a Vessel Safety Check
- Prepare a Pre-Departure Checklist
- Check the weather before sailing
- File a Float Plan with at least one person on land

### Boat Smart. Boat Safe. Boat Sober.

See RI's Alcohol Boating Safety Act at <http://webserv-er.rilin.state.ri.us/statutes/title46/46-22.2/index.htm>



Warren Harbor master staff and Warren Police officer team up to ensure safe boating on our waters.

## Practical Steps to Help Make Summer Safe for Teens



**There's so much information out there about making homes safe for toddlers. But what about making them safe for teens? During the summer months, many teens are home alone for at least some amount of time, and parents want to help them avoid any risky behaviors.**

While you can't keep all dangers out of reach of teens, you can help reduce the risks. Start with those risks that you can mitigate. Just like with young children, you want to lock up the things you don't want your teens getting into.

- Secure alcoholic beverages, including those kept in the refrigerator in the garage or basement.
- Store prescription medications and over the counter drugs in a secure place.
- If you have cannabis products or edibles in your home, store them in a secure place.
- If you possess firearms, make sure they are securely stored and unloaded, and ammunition is securely stored in a separate location.

***And don't forget to ask the parents of your child's friends if they have taken similar precautions.***

**Talk to your teen about responsible phone use.** That means no use while driving. No texts. No Snapchat posts or checking their Instagram. No calls. They need to know that when they are driving, the phone is not in use. iPhones have a feature where notifications are automatically turned off when motion is detected.

**Make sure your teen eats healthy.** Plan a menu with your kids to get their input and teach them how to build a healthy diet on their own. Have at least one meal together as a family. It not only ensures your child is having a healthy meal, but it fosters communication which is a key prevention tool!

# What to Know About Cannabis-Infused Drinks

More than half of Americans live in states where recreational cannabis is legal. While alcohol remains the most-used drug in the US, daily cannabis use has actually outpaced daily drinking, according to a study. Changing drinking habits including “Dry January” and “Sober October” as well as new products likely play a role.

## What are cannabis-infused drinks?

First, a brief primer on the difference between cannabis (marijuana) and hemp. Varieties of cannabis that contain low levels of THC (less than 0.3%) are classified as hemp, while those with more than 0.3% THC are considered cannabis. However, the type and amount of cannabinoids that different cannabis-based products claim to contain vary widely — and the labels aren’t necessarily accurate, says Dr. Staci Gruber, an associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School who directs the Marijuana Investigations for Neuroscientific Discovery (MIND) Program at McLean Hospital.

Many cannabis-infused drinks list THC as an ingredient, and while there is no standard dose, 5 milligrams (mg) is typically used in research studies of the drug. Some “low-dose” beverages contain 2 to 4 mg of THC in an 8-ounce container. Other products can contain as much as 200 mg of THC. The drinks may also contain caffeine, alcohol, or other substances. State laws vary on whether and where these drinks can be sold and on age restrictions.

## How do cannabis drinks differ from edibles?

Edibles are foods containing cannabis, such as gummies, brownies, or cookies. The cannabinoids found in beverages are specially formulated to dissolve in liquid. This means they are more easily and rapidly absorbed into the body’s soft tissues. “Some people say they feel the effects of cannabis-infused drinks within 15 to 20 minutes, which is much faster than when people eat a cannabis gummie or brownie,” says Dr. Gruber. Those products take at least 30 to 90 minutes to take effect because they must be digested and then processed through your liver, she explains.

## How do the effects of cannabis drinks compare with alcoholic drinks?

While everyone is different, people generally know how they’re going to react if they drink, says Dr. Gruber. But people are less familiar with the effects of cannabis in general — and of cannabis beverages in particular. That’s compounded by the varied amounts, mixtures, and other ingredients different drinks may contain.



Currently, there are over 80 establishments in Rhode Island licensed to sell hemp-derived consumable CBD products which covers THC-infused beverages. While the legal age to purchase any THC-infused or alcoholic product is still 21, we should be aware of the availability of THC-infused drinks and how they may be marketed could pose a health concern for teens and young adults under age 21.

*Adapted from an article in the Harvard Heart Letter– July 2024.*

## Community RESOURCES

**East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)**  
100 Bullocks Point Ave., Riverside, RI 401) 437-1000

**East Bay Center 2 Old County Rd., Barrington, RI**  
(401) 246-1195

**East Bay Recovery Center 31 Railroad Ave., Warren, RI**  
(401) 302-6231 or 401-289-2055

**BH Link Hotline — (401) 414-LINK (414-5465)**  
24/7 – help with a behavioral healthcare crisis.

**St. Mary of the Bay Food Pantry**  
645 Main St., Warren RI (401) 245-7000 ext 19

**Warren Health Equity Zone (HEZ)**  
790 Main St., Warren RI (401) 486-5195



**Warren**  
Prevention Coalition

514 Main Street, Warren, RI 02885 • 401.245.7387

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For information, contact Ann Marie Roy at [ARoy@townofwarren-ri.gov](mailto:ARoy@townofwarren-ri.gov) or Maria Ursini at [Mursini@townofwarren-ri.gov](mailto:Mursini@townofwarren-ri.gov).

Funding for this newsletter from SAMHSA's Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) and Legislative Funding.

[warrenprevention.com](http://warrenprevention.com)