

# START SMART...

The keys to safe  
teen driving



## 8 Alcohol & Other Drug Use and Driving—Prohibited!

### Why is driving after alcohol or drug use so dangerous?

- Drinking *any*—yes, *any*—amount of alcohol produces impairment, particularly in teens.
- Drinking *any* amount of alcohol reduces eye and hand coordination, slows reflexes, blurs vision, and most importantly, impairs judgment.
- Driving after drinking *any* amount of alcohol increases the risk of a crash or injury. The more alcohol, the more danger.
- Teens are inexperienced drivers and inexperienced drinkers.
- The combination of driving inexperience and alcohol use can be deadly.

### Parents' comments on drinking and driving...

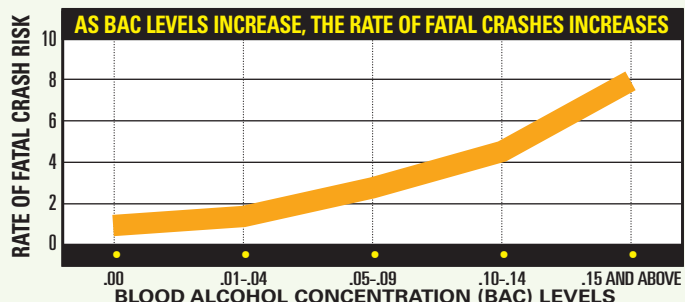
"No parent likes to think his son or daughter would drive after drinking or using drugs, but you never know. I think it's a good idea to let them know what the consequences would be. My son knows he can call for help anytime. I'm there to help him, but he'll hear about it later."—Kathy L.

"I think my daughter knows better than to drink and drive, but I am not so sure that she wouldn't ride with a friend who has been drinking. I think she ought to know that I will take away her driving privileges for even accepting a ride with someone who has been drinking."—Paul L.

**Make it totally clear that mixing driving with alcohol or other drugs is unacceptable.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Even a small amount of alcohol causes impairment. Studies show that impairment can begin with the first sip and increase with continued drinking. For this reason, drinking *any* alcohol makes driving even more dangerous.
- ✓ In the U.S., eight young people die every day in alcohol-related crashes.
- ✓ Alcohol is involved in about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of fatal crashes involving 16- to 19-year-old drivers.
- ✓ Twenty percent of high school juniors and seniors have driven after drinking; 39% have ridden with friends who had been drinking.
- ✓ Young drivers are about 1.5 times more likely to have a fatal crash after having 1 or 2 drinks and about 3 times more likely after 3 drinks.
- ✓ Driving after *any* amount of alcohol or other drug use is illegal for teens.
- ✓ Teens can lose their license if caught driving after *any* amount of alcohol or other drug use.



## AAA StartSmart recommends...

Parents and teens should talk about *no* driving after using alcohol or other drugs and set rules and consequences related to substance use and driving *before* teens get a driver's license.

Make an absolutely clear Zero Tolerance Policy—mix *any* amount of alcohol or other drugs with driving and lose all driving privileges. This rule should apply to all situations, including driving or riding in a car with someone who is driving after using alcohol or other drugs, or driving or riding in a car while any passenger is using alcohol or other drugs.



### SET RULES RELATED TO ALCOHOL/DRUG USE AND DRIVING!

As a Family, You Can Help Reduce Teen Driving Risk by Doing the Following:

**1** Talk about the dangers related to driving after using alcohol or other drugs (*see front page*).

**2** Decide the following:

- *There will be a Zero Tolerance Policy for alcohol or other drug use and driving. Any violation will result in the loss of all driving privileges.*

**3** Set the following rules:

- *Obey all traffic laws, including never use alcohol or other drugs and drive.*
- *Never ride with a driver who has consumed alcohol or other drugs.*
- *Never ride in a car where any alcohol or other drug use is occurring.*
- *Call home if you cannot get home safely. Parent will arrange a safe ride home.*
- *Other:* \_\_\_\_\_

**4** Set possible consequences for breaking driving rules, for example:

- *Teen drove after using alcohol or other drugs.*
  - Lose driving privileges for \_\_\_\_\_ months/years.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- *Teen rode with a friend who drove after using alcohol or other drugs.*
  - Lose driving privileges for \_\_\_\_\_ months/years.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_