

CASA: TIPS for Your Kids to Drive 'Above the Influence'

The statistics are clear that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-19 year-olds. And, in a comprehensive study on unsafe driving by high school students, 30 percent of seniors reported driving after heavy drinking or using drugs, or riding in a car whose driver had been drinking heavily or using drugs, at least once the prior two weeks. The cause of many teenage crashes is an issue of attitude, maturity and driving under the influence.

Manhasset CASA asks parents and all community residents to have "the talk" with the young people within their lives. Parents and caregivers can help shape a responsible attitude about driving and take immediate steps to limit the potential dangers of teen driving. Getting a driver's license is an exciting and risky time for teens. Let's help them develop healthy and responsible driving habits:

1. Remember you are a role model. New drivers learn a lot by example, so practice safe driving by obeying speed limits and demonstrating safe driving habits;

2. Supervise as much practice driving as possible for at least six months. This will get a teen acclimated to the road before he or she takes a driving test to get a license. Let your teen drive in a wide variety of driving conditions to build experience and confidence;

3. Start out slow. Start with slow moving traffic environments and gradually introduce your teen to more difficult driving situations such as highway driving, merge ramps and major urban areas. Parents need to assure their teens build up their experience before jumping into highway traffic;

4. Require that your teenager wear safe-

ty belts at all times—no exceptions. If you wear your safety belt every time you drive, your son or daughter may adopt this behavior more readily;

5. Make sure your teen is aware of potential safety issues as well as how to respond to safety or emergency situations. Keep a highway safety kit in the trunk of your teen's vehicle and review with them how to use its resources;

6. Be clear that teens should never use their cell phones or text while they are driving. If it is necessary to use a cell phone, instruct your teenager to pull safely over to the side of the road to make an emergency call;

7. Limit nighttime driving. Many teen

car crashes take place between 9 p.m. and 12 a.m. so it's best for beginning drivers to be restricted to driving during the day initially, and gradually be introduced to night driving as they gain experience;

8. Limit the number of passengers allowed in the car when your teen is driving. Having more passengers in a car increases the chance of greater risk-taking, primarily because of greater peer pressure and more distractions;

9. Discuss realistic consequences of drug and alcohol use. Remind them that it is illegal for teens to drink alcohol—and illegal for anyone to use illicit drugs. Discuss how drugs and alcohol can impair their senses, affect perception, and cause delayed reac-

tion time. It's important to note that even one drink or joint can impact the senses, as can prescription drugs taken with a physician's order. Make it clear that alcohol, marijuana or other drug use when driving is completely unacceptable;

10. Choose safe vehicles for your teenagers. Look for automobiles with high safety ratings (air bags, crumple zones, etc.) and review federal statistics and consumer-report literature to help evaluate the safety rating of a vehicle. All are well aware of the terrible consequence of driving drunk.

For more information about drunk, drugged or distracted driving, go to www.manhassetcasa.org.

17th Annual Manhasset Kid's Holiday Show Is December 17

Lisa from DunRite Cleaners on Bayview Avenue points across the street to Nancy Morris' State Farm Insurance Agency where Nancy has tickets for the show. Tickets are \$4 and include the Muppets' movie, Santa, raffle prizes and more. The show, at the Clearview Theater will be held on Dec 17 at 9:30 a.m.



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