

- **Set a consistent, no-use rule.** Teens need to receive the message that alcohol or other drug use is wrong and dangerous. Make it clear to children that use will not be tolerated. Set appropriate consequences if this rule is broken.
- **Educate yourself on the dangers.** Hospitals and counseling agencies may offer classes to educate parents and other adults on the harmfulness of alcohol and other drug use and the steps that can be taken to ensure that children remain drug-free.
- **Become involved.** Research shows that the more involved adults are in a child's life, the less likely it is that the child will turn to alcohol or other drugs. Help a child by becoming involved in his or her life, sharing quality time together, and showing genuine concern for the issues that are important to the child, such as school and friends.
- **Get involved with other adults.** Many communities and school districts now have parent groups or coalitions where adults can work together to ensure a safe and drug-free community for young people. Because these adults share your concern for raising drug-free children, they can be a good source of support and education.

For parents who once used

Drug-use patterns show that widespread use of marijuana among teens began to occur in the '60s and '70s. Many young people from that era are now parents themselves, which can make it uncomfortable if their children ask if they ever tried marijuana.

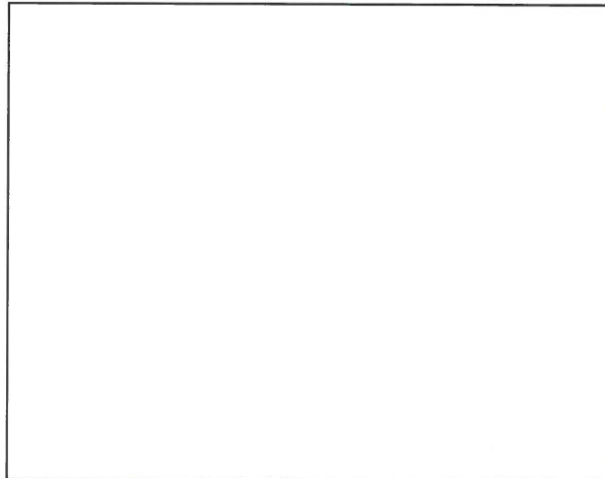
In this situation, experts advise parents to respond with honesty and facts, not by lying, changing the subject, leaving the room or acting as though they didn't hear. Here's one way to respond:

"Yes I did try pot, but at that time, little was known about its hazards. We've learned a lot more about pot in recent years. There's now

strong evidence about the dangers and health consequences of marijuana use. What's more, pot today is far more potent than the pot that was available when I was young. This makes marijuana use something that everyone knows should be avoided. We took a big risk when we used when I was a teen, and many people suffered very serious consequences."

Help is available

Just talking about your problems sometimes leads to new solutions. If you or someone you know needs information, guidance or help, contact the resource and number listed below or look in the yellow pages for local professionals who can help.



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TEEN MARIJUANA USE

