

## Talking with Teens about Alcohol and Cancer Risk

During Red Ribbon Week we want to encourage our families to speak with their students about alcohol. Most teens know that alcohol can affect decision-making, safe driving, and even lead to alcohol poisoning. But many teens - and even adults - don't know that alcohol can also increase **cancer risk**.

Research shows a clear link between alcohol and cancer risk. Alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of at least **seven types of cancer**, including colorectal, breast, liver, mouth, voice box, throat, and esophageal cancers. These risks exist even at low levels of drinking. Yet surveys indicate that most Americans don't know about this connection. Earlier this year, the Surgeon General issued an advisory highlighting how alcohol increases cancer risk and recommending new health warning labels on alcoholic beverages.

### So what can parents and caregivers do?

Keep talking with your teen. Short, frequent conversations with your teen work best. Make sure they understand all the risks associated with underage drinking, including the link to cancer. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services provides practical [talking points](#) for parents to help make these connections. One question they address from parents is especially reassuring: *"What if I mess it up?"* The answer: *You can't. Having a lot of talks (even do-overs) is the point. Every attempt shows kids you care and are paying attention.*

**Remember:** Short, ongoing conversations about the risks of alcohol help your teen make informed, healthy choices - today and in the future.

If you have any questions or want further information please reach out to Mrs. Rupp in the Counseling Department at [arupp@sfhscollegeprep.org](mailto:arupp@sfhscollegeprep.org)