

## Driving Under the Influence

You might think that driving after one drink is okay, but would you want your teen to do the same thing? If you've got a set of car keys in your hand, you just identified the top reason to steer clear from drugs and alcohol, even if you think you're okay to drive. More people use drugs and alcohol during the holiday season than at other times of the year. Party-goers tend to use the substances in their celebrations, but the increase also occurs because many people use drugs and alcohol to combat the loneliness and depression that strike during the holiday season. The result is that more drunk and drugged drivers are hitting the road, endangering themselves and everyone who crosses their path.

Think you know the facts and stats on driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol? Here are a few to make you think again:

- Impaired driving is the leading cause of death for people under age 30.
- Impaired drivers injure more than 300,000 people each year.
- The average person has a 20 percent chance of being involved in an alcohol-related collision during his or her lifetime.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), drunk driving deaths increased by nearly 4 percent (677 people) nationwide last year to reach an alarming total of 16,653 deaths in alcohol-related crashes.
- Because of terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, many people are choosing to drive instead of fly. AAA estimated that 87 percent of holiday travelers would choose to drive - and that estimation came before the crash of American Airlines Flight 587 on November 12, 2001.
- Last year, alcohol was a factor in 40 percent of fatal crashes and in 8 percent of all crashes. Every 33 minutes someone in America dies in an alcohol-related collision; an injury occurs every 8 minutes.

The bottom line is that if you drive under the influence of drugs and alcohol, you're risking your own safety as well as the safety of others. Your best option is to steer clear of dangerous substances like drugs and alcohol and encourage your teen to do the same. These options can help you and your teen if you find yourself in a situation in which you can't safely drive, or you're the passenger of an impaired driver:

- Use public transportation.
- Use the free cab service offered by many organizations during the holiday season.
- Call a friend.
- Elect a designated driver for the evening who agrees to avoid all substances and transport everyone home safely.

You may also want to establish a "No questions asked" policy with your teen in which he agrees to call you if he can't drive or if he is the passenger of someone who can't drive, and you agree to not ask questions about the situation. It can be tough to avoid questioning your teen if you find him in this situation, but the consequences of drunk and drugged driving are much tougher.

### Resources Are Available

Additional information, self-help tools and other resources are available online at [www.MagellanHealth.com](http://www.MagellanHealth.com). Or call us for more information, help and support. Counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.