

# Be Responsible, Merrimack!



Since 1988, Merrimack Safeguard has grown from the Merrimack Drug Advisory Council to include more than 25 members that represent our community, including law enforcement, education, parents, youth, business, faith communities, youth-serving organizations, civic organizations, and the like. We gather monthly to develop and implement strategies to measurably improve the lives of Merrimack residents and reduce high-risk behavior among youth. Our mission is to help youth and families in Merrimack, NH, make positive choices.

**Join Us!**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month**  
**6:00pm – 7:30pm**  
**St. James UMC = 646 DW Highway**

For more information, contact  
**Tom Prentice, Coordinator**  
[tprentice@merrimacknh.gov](mailto:tprentice@merrimacknh.gov)

## Be Responsible! CHECKLIST

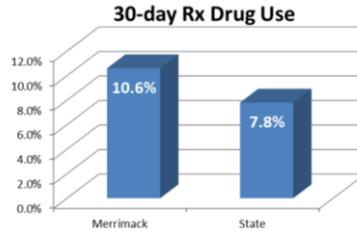


- Do you know it's **illegal to host a party that provides alcohol** to anyone under 21 regardless of the circumstances? You could face a \$2,000 FINE and a year in jail.
- Twenty percent of our students said they've ridden in cars where the **driver had been drinking**. It takes at least an hour to absorb one 12 ounce beer, one 6 ounce glass of wine or one ounce of hard liquor. Always make sure you're safe to drive.
- Do you make sure that you wear your seat belt, keep your cell phone in your pocket and keep your eyes on the road? **Our kids do what we do!** Let's keep them safe!
- Many people use designated drivers for a night on the town. However, most adults aren't aware of the **physical impact of excessive drinking**. Please talk to your health care provider to ensure you are within safe limits for you!



## Prescription Drug DISPOSAL

Merrimack Youth use prescription drugs at higher rates than peers around the State of NH.



### We need your help!

In 2013, Merrimack Police installed a permanent 24/7 Drop Box to anonymously collect unneeded meds in the lobby of Merrimack Police Department.

### Please clean out your cupboards today!

Twice per year, Merrimack Police also held "Take Back" events with the DEA where residents dropped off extra medicine. Upwards of 1400 pounds of prescription drugs have been removed from our homes to help keep our youth safe.

### Please remember to lock up the prescriptions you use regularly.

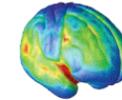
Lock boxes, available at local retailers, ensure your medication is safe from theft by unauthorized users. They are designed to be installed securely in drawers or on the wall.



## Alcohol Misuse & BINGE DRINKING

In 2013, 39% of Merrimack's 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> graders who had a drink of alcohol in the past 30 days obtained it *by having someone give it to them!*

### Communicate your family policy that it's NOT okay to accept alcohol from anyone.



Adolescence

Heavy drinking in the teen years causes long **lasting harm to the brain**, and it's **illegal**. Penalties can include not getting a driver's license on time, having the license removed for driving with any trace of alcohol in the body, losing a job, and losing a college scholarship.

**72%** of Merrimack teens agree that their parents have clear rules and standards for their behavior. Do you?

### Start a conversation!



- **Spend time** together regularly.
- **Listen and talk** with your children. Try to understand the pressures placed on them and don't criticize their beliefs.
- **Keep track** of where your children are, what they are doing, and who their friends are.
- **Get them involved** in after-school activities so they won't be able to just "hang out" with friends in the afternoon. This is when children are most likely to experiment.
- **Praise or reward** your children often. If they feel good about themselves, they will be more confident and better able to resist peer pressure.
- **Be a positive role model** for your children. Don't abuse alcohol or drugs.

Funding provided by the Drug Free Communities Support Program, a collaborative effort between the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



# What Should I LOOK FOR?

If you see any of these **signs and symptoms** of teen drinking and drug use, please **talk with your healthcare provider, school nurse or local substance misuse professional**. An assessment will help determine how severe the concerns are and a wide array of education and counseling is available.

**Please don't wait.  
It may NOT just be a "phase".**

- Changes in **friends**
- **Negative changes in schoolwork**, missing school, or declining grades
- Increased **secrecy** about possessions or activities
- Use of **incense, room deodorant**, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odors
- Subtle **changes in conversations** with friends, e.g. more secretive, using "coded" language
- **Change in clothing choices**: fascination with clothes that highlight drug use
- Increase in **borrowing money**
- Evidence of **drug paraphernalia** such as pipes, rolling papers, etc.
- Evidence of use of **inhalant products** (such as hairspray, nail polish, correction fluid, common household products); Rags and paper bags are sometimes used as accessories
- Bottles of **eye drops**, which may be used to mask bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils
- New use of **mouthwash or breath mints** to cover up the smell of alcohol
- **Missing prescription drugs**—especially narcotics and mood stabilizers

*(Parents. The Anti-Drug)*

Data shows us that we need to work on the following in the coming year:



## Underage Drinking

- Youth in Merrimack are self-medicating with alcohol and other drugs.
- We need to increase parental awareness of the risks of substance use and enhance communication skills.
- Youth in Merrimack are taking unsafe risks when using alcohol or other drugs.
- Peers lack the tools to support each other.



## Prescription Drug Abuse

- Environmental stress leads to easy access to prescriptions.
- There is a communication disconnect between parents and youth.
- Teens don't realize the danger of using prescription drugs as a "quick fix".
- Parent communication around drug use relaxes as youth grow older.



## Join Us! We need YOU!

Youth, Parents, Media, Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, Law Enforcement, Religious or Fraternal Organizations, Civic/Volunteer Groups, Healthcare Professionals, State, Local or Tribal Governmental agencies, and organizations involved in reducing substance abuse.

Check us out at

[www.MerrimackSafeguard.org](http://www.MerrimackSafeguard.org)

Contact the NH Alcohol & Drug Treatment Locator for a provider near you!  
[www.NHTreatment.org](http://www.NHTreatment.org)

