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## Booster Shots

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### Parenting style influences teen drinking patterns, researchers say

June 24, 2010 | 6:00 am

Some parents assume that teenagers will drink alcohol and there is little they can do to prevent it. Research does indicate that parenting has little effect on whether kids decide to try alcohol. But parenting attitudes and actions can make a big difference in how much and how often a teenager drinks.



Researchers at Brigham Young University surveyed 5,000 adolescents about their drinking habits and their relationship with their parents. They found the kids least prone to heavy drinking had parents who scored high on accountability (knowing where their kids were and with whom) and warmth. Having so-called "indulgent" parents, who were low on accountability and high on warmth, nearly tripled the risk of the teen participating in heavy drinking. The study also found that "strict" parents -- high on accountability and low on warmth -- more than doubled their teen's risk of heavy drinking. These results were apparent even when researchers controlled for other influences, such as peer pressure, religious and economic background.

"Authoritative parents tend to be highly demanding and highly responsive," the authors wrote. "They monitor their children closely and provide high levels of support and warmth. Our data suggest that peer encouragement to drink might have less impact when parents are both highly supportive and highly attentive."

The study is published in the July issue of the [Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs](#).

-- Shari Roan

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