

Prom Health and Safety Tips

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier people.

Prom can be one of the highlights of the high school experience. Making smart decisions can help you look and feel great, stress less, and protect yourself.

What can you do to look and feel great? First, get in shape slowly and wisely. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and avoid crash diets and foods and drinks high in calories, saturated fat, and added sugars. Find fun ways to stay active for 60 minutes a day, most days of the week. And don't forget to get plenty of sleep.

Second, protect your skin. You don't need a tan to be beautiful, and you definitely don't need a sunburn. Just a few serious sunburns can increase your risk for skin cancer later in life. Avoid indoor and outdoor tanning, and always use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.

Next, if you're using a new hair color, relaxer, or cosmetic, test it in a small area first. Stop using the product if problems develop. Follow all directions, cautions, and warnings on the label. And don't forget to remove make-up before bedtime to prevent skin and eye irritation.

Finally, high heels may be in style, but they can increase your chance of falling if they're too high, uncomfortable, or not something you usually wear. Prevent injury and wear comfortable shoes that won't affect how you walk or dance.

What can you do to stress less and protect yourself? First, watch your budget. If cost is an issue, look for alternatives to spending a lot of money. Expensive doesn't necessarily mean better.

Second, plan ahead for safety. Tell family what your plans are. Agree with friends to check on each other during the evening. Be sure someone you trust is available if your plans change or you need a ride home.

Remember, whether you plan to go with a date, with friends, or on your own, the point is to have a good time. Going with a group or meeting friends at the event can be just as fun as going with one special person.

Some people feel pressured to drink, smoke, use drugs, or have sex on prom night. However, drinking is responsible for over 4500 deaths among young people each year and is associated with other problems like sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy. Alcohol and drugs impair judgment and may result in being harmed or harming others. Just because your friends do something doesn't make it a good idea or right for you. It's OK to say no.

Did you know that teen drivers 16 to 19 years old are four times more likely than older drivers to crash? Always wear a safety belt. Don't drink and drive, and don't get in a car with a driver who has been drinking.

Dating abuse is a very real issue for many young people. The abuse can be verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual. Respect yourself and others. Call 911 if you or someone you know is being abused.

Finally, if you plan to go to an after-prom party, be sure it is adult-supervised and has an observed start and end time. Go with a friend to ensure each other's safety.

Follow these tips for a safe and healthy prom... and have fun!

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/family/prom.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.