SAFE kids HEALTHY kids HAPPY kids





Beware of Home Drug-Test Kits

Many websites sell home drug-test kits to parents. A recent study, however, suggests that

home drug-test kits may *not* be the *best* way to find out if a teen is using drugs.

Laboratories follow certain guidelines. Trained staff collect and perform the drug test. With home drug-testing, guidelines are not followed. Parents are simply not trained to perform such important tests. Higher rates of error – false positives and false negatives – result.

Parents may not know which test to choose. Drug tests are very specific. A parent may drug-test their child for a drug that their child is not using. When the test result shows a negative, the parent may think their child is "drug free." Actually, their child could be using a different drug. Because of the negative test result, the parent may not get help for their teen.

Test results could show a "false positive" if a teen is taking high doses of caffeine or certain cold medications. Even poppy seeds in bagels and other foods may result in a false positive for the drug morphine. Parents do not know or understand such technical information.

Most websites do not discuss important details about collecting urine and hair samples. The parents will be responsible for getting a urine or hair sample from their teen. A parent must watch their teen give the urine sample. This is awkward and embarrassing. Yet, teens may try to change the urine sample in some way. The teen may think it is an invasion of privacy. This procedure, alone, could damage the parent/child relationship.

Abuse of drugs can be deadly. *Teens* who abuse drugs are in trouble. They need help from parents and professionals. Drug prevention and rehab centers such as Triangle Center in Springfield offer low-cost, confidential testing. They also can follow-up a positive test with counseling and treatment.

Drug testing is only one way to find out if a teen is using drugs. Talking to a teen is another way. Teens are more likely to talk to a parent if they have a positive, loving relationship with them. Home-drug testing *may* hurt that relationship.

Drug testing is only one means for prevention. A more powerful prevention is – *talk*, *listen and love*.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help. 544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.