

SEPTEMBER– NOT TO FAR AWAY

By the end of August, most of us, children, tweens, teens and parents are ready for school to begin again. But, as with any new beginning new challenges may arise: maybe a different school, definitely new classrooms, new teachers, maybe some new friends. Parents should be aware of any anxiety their children experience and help their children adjust to new situations. Be supportive. Listen to concerns.

College Bound

Going off to college for the first time is unique life experience. Living away from home, facing problems alone, and making decisions without the safety net and support of family could **cause problems and confusion.**

The temptation to drink, and drink excessively faces every college student. High risk drinking, (drinking more than the liver can process*) causes more than 1700 deaths, more than 97,000 sexual assaults more than 700,000 assaults and more than 600,000 other injuries on college campuses across the country.

Alcohol affects the way the brain works which affects behavior: reduced inhibitions, loss of self-control, false confidence, impaired judgment, apathy, and depression. Alcohol causes blurred vision, makes the heart work harder, stops the kidneys from keeping the correct balance of fluid in the body, swells arteries in the head causing headaches,-just to name a very small number of negative affects alcohol has on the mind and body.

Parents need to talk to their students about alcohol. Present all the facts. Drinking before the brain is fully developed, which happens about 24, can cause many and serious problems. Drinking is not a rite of passage. It is a dangerous pastime for teens and young adults.

*The liver can process about 1 oz of alcohol in one hour.



[http://www.bghealth.org/vsaac/vsaac turning 21](http://www.bghealth.org/vsaac/vsaac%20turning%2021)

TURNING 21

A PROJECT TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults away at college will reach legal drinking age of 21 years old. Parents aren't always aware of the drinking culture at most college campuses and how some teens, away from home, will celebrate. College drinking is a national health issue. And students who may not drink, or not drink heavily before 21, will feel that, now, they are "legal" and will drink excessively.

One way to remind young adults to be responsible would be to send a **"Happy 21st Birthday"** card compliments of the Valley Substance Abuse Action Council. E-mail or call VSAAC with the name, address and birth date of the young adult and we will send the card.

Register at turning21@bghealth.org or call 203-736-8566.



BULLYING: It doesn't have to be a part of growing up!

Three fourths of all kids claim they have been bullied or teased. Bullying can cause sadness, anxiety, stress and fear. Bullying can be physical or verbal and it can be perpetrated by one person or a group of individuals. Bullying happens person to person or through technology— cell phones and computer social networking sites. Children who are bullied can experience real suffering that can affect their emotional and social development which can last into adulthood and may be expressed by low self-esteem and depression.

If your child is being bullied: Listen to their concerns. Help him/her practice being assertive. Encourage him/her to talk to an adult when bullying happens. Encourage him/her to spend time with friends s/he is comfortable with. Stay with these friends on the playground. Walk to the bus with a group. Help your child find an activity where friends can be found

If your child is a bully: Get help. If not addressed, bullying can lead to serious social, emotional and legal issues. About 20% of boys who bully end up being an adult bully. There is also an association with early bullying and later criminal activity.

Dating violence is a form of bullying. Domestic violence is a form of bullying.










If your child witnesses bullying: Encourage him/her to speak up. Bystanders can change the culture of bullying. Walking away from someone who is being bullied, reinforces the bullying behavior.

Bullying is serious— take it seriously!

No age is immune from bullies. Most bullying takes place in and around school. Riding the bus, going to the bathroom, and being out on the playground are all activities that can become dreaded and scary for a youth. Be sure your child's school is making every effort to curtail bullying behavior—from kindergarten right through high school.

FAST FACTS

BACKPACKS

-  Should not be more than 10 to 20 % of a child's total weight
-  Should not fall below the waist— about 1" above the waist is good
-  Straps should be at least 2 inches wide
-  Straps should be padded
-  Portion of the backpack against a child's back should be padded
-  Heaviest books should be placed in the center closest to the back
-  All compartments should be used in order to distribute weight
-  Both straps should be used
-  Slings a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles