

Teach your kids to deal with peer pressure.

Practice makes perfect.

Listen to your gut.

If you feel uncomfortable, even if your friends seem okay, it means that something about the situation is wrong for you.

Plan ahead.

If you think you may be offered alcohol or drugs, think ahead about how you will handle it. Decide & even rehearse what you will say & do. Learn a few tricks (ex: if you hold a drink like water or soda, you are less likely to be offered alcohol).

Arrange a “bail-out” phrase you can use with your parents.

Call home when you’re feeling pressured & say “Can you come & get me? I’m feeling sick.” Or use another phrase your friends won’t notice.

Blame your parents.

“Are you kidding? If my mom found out, she’d kill me.” If a situation seems dangerous, don’t hesitate to get an adult’s help.

Hang out with people who feel the same way you do.

Choose friends who will stand up for you & do the same for your friends. If a voice tells you a situation’s not right, chances are you’re right. Having one person stand with you makes it easier for both people to resist.

The power of numbers.

Make a pact with your friends to stick to your guns. Often, knowing that your friends will back you up can help you feel more comfortable being assertive. Sometimes “we” feels stronger than “I”.

Give a reason why it’s a bad idea.

Maybe you don’t want to drink because you know drinking has messed up someone else’s life. Backing up your refusal with a reason gives it more power.

Just say no, plainly & firmly.

In some situations, just saying no without a lot of arguing or explaining is the best response. Just make sure your “no” is strong & determined.

Thanks, but no thanks.

Be polite. It’s just not something that you’re into.

Make a joke.

Sometimes humour is the best way to respond. It can lighten a serious mood. It can also move attention away from you & onto something else.

Make an excuse why you can’t.

Maybe you have something else to do, or you have to be somewhere at a specific time, or something else that will interfere. Whatever it is, say it & stick to it.

Suggest an alternative activity.

Lots of kids wind up doing stuff they shouldn’t because they lack other options. They’re bored. By thinking of something better to do, you’re offering everyone an “out.” You just might be surprised who might take you up on it.

Repeat yourself if necessary.

Sometimes it takes more than once, on more than one occasion. Just because someone asks more than once, that doesn’t mean you have to give in.

Ignore the suggestion.

Pretend you didn’t hear it & change the topic to something else. Act like you don’t think the idea was even worth talking about.

Leave the situation.

If you don’t like where things are headed, you can take off. It might seem risky, but with you leading the way, other kids who really don’t want to do it either may follow you.