Hey!
I have a random question. What do you say when you're pressured to drink?

Hey!
I'm just honest and say that I don't drink. It usually works.

What if that doesn't work?

You blame your parents! Seriously. Your mom would ground you forever! Or say that you can't risk getting caught. Or say that you don't feel well! Endless options.

You're brilliant!

You'd better believe it!
As you get older, you may face new social situations that make saying “no” tougher than ever before. You want to do the right thing, but sometimes peer pressure can make it difficult.

**What are some ways you can say “no” when you’re pressured to drink alcohol?**

It’s possible that refusing alcohol is as simple as telling the truth:

- No, thanks. I’m not 21 and I’m not interested in breaking the law.
- No, I don’t like drinking.
- No, I don’t drink.
- No, I’m not drinking tonight.
- No way! I’m not going to risk getting caught.

**What can you say if the pressure to drink alcohol continues?**

Sometimes your peers take your refusal as a challenge. They may feel that you should have a better reason for not drinking alcohol:

- No, I’m good. I can’t handle that stuff!
- No, I have to drive.
- No way! I would be grounded for life if my parents found out. So not worth it!
- I can’t drink, I’m on medications that aren’t safe to mix with alcohol.
- No, I’m not feeling very well. Thanks, anyway.

**What are some other things to think about?**

Your peers should respect your decision and your reason for choosing not to drink alcohol. Why are your peers pressuring you to drink alcohol? There may be times when a peer or friend will try to pressure you to drink simply because he or she does not want to drink alone. He or she may feel less guilt if you join in. If your decision is a responsible one that benefits you and your future, it doesn’t matter what peers think.

**Aren’t there health risks?**

Yes! The human brain, on average, is not fully developed until age 25. Alcohol can alter its growth and development.

**There are probably legal risks, too, right?**

Of course! Drinking alcohol under 21 is illegal. If you’re caught, you may face problems that could hurt your future.

**But if I don’t drink, won’t I look childish?**

Absolutely not! Refusing to drink underage is smart and responsible — two traits of maturity.

For more information:

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