



Teens' assertiveness may help them resist peer pressure

By Mary Elizabeth Dallas, HealthDay

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Does your teen often disagree with your views -- and let you know exactly why he or she knows you're wrong? Is your teen able to make well-reasoned, albeit annoying, arguments for being able to stay out later, or not cleaning the bedroom?

Their assertiveness might be trying, but there's a silver lining: A new study finds that teens who stand up for their views in family discussions are better at standing up to their friends who pressure them to drink or use drugs.

The study appears Thursday in the journal Child Development.

Researchers from the University of Virginia gathered information on drug and alcohol use among a diverse group of 150 teenagers. They also examined the teens' social skills and friendships as well as how they communicated with their moms.

The study found the teens that were best able to resist peer pressure were those who openly expressed their views with their mom. These teens also used reasonable arguments instead of whining or using insults to influence their mother's opinion on common issues, such as grades, household rules, money and chores.

"The healthy autonomy they'd established at home seemed to carry over into their relationships with peers," said study leader Joseph Allen, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, in a journal news release. "It may be that teens who are secure in their ability to turn to their mothers under stress are less likely to end up feeling overly dependent upon their close friends, and thus less

likely to be influenced by their friend's behavior when it's negative."

On the Web:

The U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism provides information for teenagers on drinking and peer pressure: <http://www.thecoolspot.gov/>

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