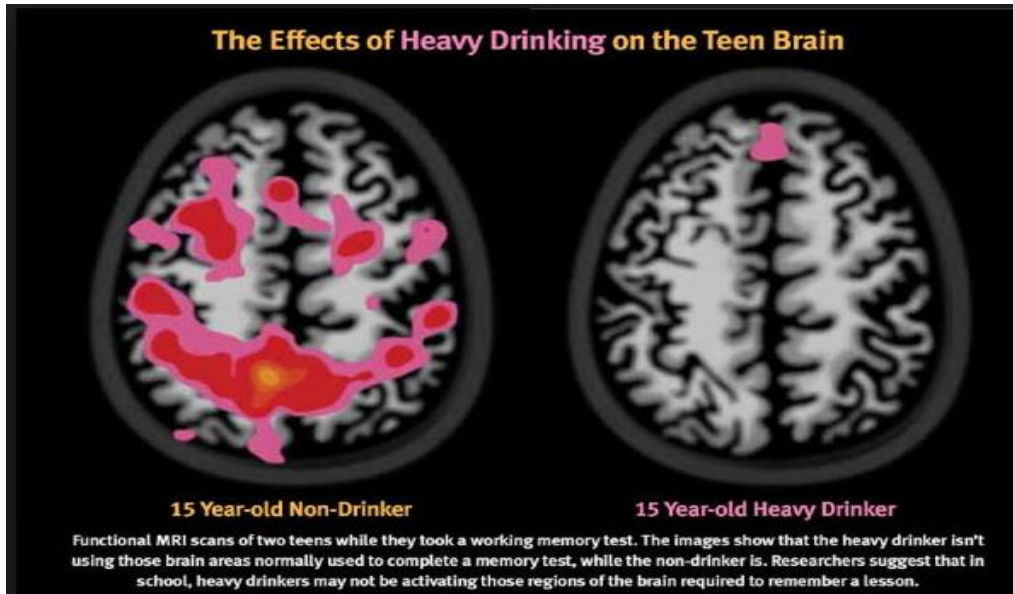


Why is the nurse asking me about alcohol and other drugs? Asking these questions is part of good health care, just like checking your height and weight. Your honest answers can help the nurse give you the best care.

What's the big deal about alcohol and drugs? Your body and brain are still growing. Alcohol and drugs can interfere with the way your brain develops, damaging the parts of your brain that control memory, learning, making decisions and keeping our feelings under control.

WHICH BRAIN DO YOU CHOOSE?



Brain activity during a memory task. Brain activation shown in bright colors.
Heavy drinker is sober during this test.

Can drinking or getting high really hurt me? 1 out of every 4 teens who die in car accidents are driving while drunk or high, or riding with people who have been using drugs or alcohol. Teens who drink or use other drugs are more likely to have unsafe sex, which could lead to pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Alcohol and drugs are connected with the leading causes of death among teenagers- accidental injury, homicide, and suicide.

Who can I talk to about drugs or alcohol? Who can help me if I'm concerned about myself or someone else? Try talking to your parents. If your need to talk to someone else try:

- * Nurse Amelie, WMS School Nurse
- * Ms. Jock, counselor
- * Your Doctor or health care provider
- * Other trusted adults, like your rabbi, minister, coach or teacher
- * Valley Human Services: 413.967.6241
- * You can also call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline at 1.800.327.5050 or go online to www.helpline-online.com

Source: "Even if You Know About Drinking or Drugs," Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

