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TEEN SUICIDE AND GUNS

PROTECT YOUR TEENAGER

- Many teens attempt suicide on impulse, and there's no second chance with a gun.
- Counting on a teen's ability to resist strong emotional impulses when there is a gun is not a good idea.
- Young people need safe environments that protect them from deadly harm.

Many teens who attempt suicide do so because of a temporary problem, like the end of a romance. When guns are involved, teens can waste their lives and destroy the happiness of their friends and families in an instant. They are thinking of a passing problem, not the outcome!

TEEN SUICIDE— A BIG PROBLEM

- Suicide is one of the 3 leading causes of death for 13- to 19-year-olds in the United States.
- An average of 4 American teenagers commit suicide every day.

Does a gun in the home increase the chance of suicide? YES!

- In states where there are more guns, more people commit suicide.
- Studies have shown that the risk of suicide is 4 to 10 times higher in homes with guns than in those without.
- If the gun is a handgun or is stored loaded or unlocked, the risk of suicide is even higher.

Does it matter how a person tries to commit suicide? YES!

- Suicide attempts with a gun are very likely to be deadly.
- Suicide attempts with drugs or methods other than guns have a greater chance of survival.

PROTECT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM KILLING THEMSELVES

Teens often see any change as a major life event. Adults and teens need to talk about things, like budding sexuality and taking responsibility for one's own actions, as they occur.

It is best to not have any guns in homes where children or teenagers live.

If there is a gun:

- Keep it unloaded and locked up or with a trigger lock. Store the bullets in a different place that is also locked.
- Do not let teens have a key to the places where guns and bullets are stored.
- If a teen becomes depressed or has severe mood swings, store the gun outside the home for the time being.

Many communities have laws that prevent teenagers from getting their own weapons.

Find out what the laws are in your community and ask that they be enforced.

Most young survivors of a serious suicide attempt do not commit suicide later, and most survivors of suicide attempts are glad they were saved.



Connected Kids are Safe, Strong, and Secure

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 66,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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