

## What Can I Do if I Want to Say No to Peer Pressure?

Sometimes it is hard to say no to friends. Often it is easier to “go along” with someone's idea than to let people know how you really feel.

Peer pressure occurs when other kids your age push you to do something that:

- you don't want to do
- makes you uncomfortable
- you know will get you in trouble

You may feel that if you don't go along, they will laugh at you or not be your friends. There are ways to say no to peer pressure that will help you get out of the situation. The trick is to practice these when you're alone, or with your parents or someone you trust. Then, when you need to use one of these, you will be more comfortable doing so.

1. **Just say no.** In some situations, just saying no without a lot of arguing and explaining is the best response. Just make sure your “no” is a strong and determined one.
2. **Give a reason why it's a bad idea.** Say no, and explain why you feel this way. Maybe you can't go to the party because it is not worth the chance of being grounded. Maybe you don't want to drink because you know someone who is an alcoholic and you can see how drinking has messed up his/her life.
3. **Make a joke.** Humour is a great way to change the topic and the mood. It can take the attention away from you.
4. **Make an excuse why you can't.** Maybe you have something else to do, you have to be somewhere at a specific time, or your mom will kill you. It doesn't matter what excuse you use, just stick to it.
5. **Suggest a different activity.** 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.
6. **Ignore the suggestion.** Pretend you didn't hear it, and change the topic to something else. Act like you don't think the idea was even worth discussing.

7. **Repeat yourself if necessary.** Sometimes you'll be asked over and over again. Stick to your decision; don't be talked into doing something you don't want to.
8. **Leave the situation.** If you think the others are going to do something you don't want to be involved in, just leave. You can make up an excuse, or you can say nothing at all. If you lead the way, others may follow.
9. **Thanks, but no thanks.** You can be polite, but you still aren't interested. You can say, "It's something I'm just not into."
10. **The power of numbers.** Talk to your closest friends about how you feel. Then you can support each other. Agree up front that we will stick together.