

Resisting Pressure to Use

When you decide to abstain from alcohol or drug use, it can be a big change. People will probably still offer you alcohol or drugs. To help you reach your goal, it is important to know how to refuse alcohol or drugs. Refusing drugs may be easy or more difficult depending on who you are with, where you are, the time of day, and so forth (based on your triggers). Being prepared by practicing refusal skills can help you stay away from drugs and reach your goal. Below are the basic steps to use for refusing alcohol or drugs.

- **Say, “No, thanks”**
 - **Display assertive body language**
 - **Suggest an alternative**
 - **Change the subject**
 - **Directly address the issue with the person pressuring you**
 - **Leave the situation**
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- **Say, “No, thanks.”** Of course, if someone offers you alcohol or drugs, saying “No, thanks” is the first thing you would want to do. To make sure the other person knows you are serious, be firm. Often strangers or acquaintances will just accept a “No, thanks” without pressuring you anymore. However, other people such as friends may want to have an explanation. Having a ready-made explanation (“No, thanks, I’m on probation and getting drug tested”) can make it easier.
 - **Display assertive body language.** Be aware of your posture and body positioning. To get your point across and show you are serious, it is best to look directly at the other person and make eye contact when refusing alcohol or drugs.
 - **Suggest an alternative.** For example, if someone offers you a beer, you might suggest something else to drink, like “No, thanks. How about a soda?” You can also suggest something else to do, like “Let’s go shoot some hoops.”
 - **Change the subject.** This shows that you are not really interested in using drugs. For example, say, “No, thanks. What did you think of that new music video?”
 - **Directly address the issue with the person pressuring you.** Use this technique as a last resort. It can strain a relationship at times. Use good communication skills, but be direct: “Hey, I get that you want to get high and I used to be into that, but I’m trying to pass my drug screens now. . . .”
 - **Leave the situation.** If you’ve tried everything else and the person still persists, then the best option is to just leave the situation. (e.g., the party, the place where the others are hanging out).