The Jersey Shore: pediatric style

We're back from a Jersey Shore medical conference where we moderated the adolescent session of the Atlantic Regional Osteopathic Convention. In the next few weeks, we'll be posting you advice gleaned from talks on teen depression, vaccine updates, fatigue in adolescents and worrisome teen drug use trends.

Today we start with advice based on Dr. Melisa Lai Becker's talk, *Trendy Tox Teen Behaviors*:

How do I know if my kid is high? Your tween or teen wanders in late on a Saturday night and acts like he is in slow motion. "I'm just tired," he claims. Is he high, you wonder? To answer the question, have him look you straight in the eye as you talk to him. Even if he is lying, the truth will be in his eyes. More specifically, it's in the size of his pupils (the black part of his eyes). Too big (nearly covers the colored part of his eyes) or too little (like pinpoints) is a sign he is currently high.

Alcohol: Parents, beware. The type of alcohol in your beer, ethanol, is the same type of alcohol in your morning mouth wash and perhaps in your medicine cabinet. The difference is that mouthwash contains more alcohol than beer. Beer typically contains up to 5 percent ethanol, wine up to 14 percent ethanol, and liquors usually up to 40 percent ethanol. Compare this to Original Listerine with 27 percent ethanol and Nyquil Nighttime Cold/Cough with 25 percent ethanol (and you wonder why it helps you fall asleep?!).

How can you tell if your kid is drunk? Again, look at his eyes- if he is drunk you may see pupils dancing in small circles. The dancing eyes give the sensation of "dizziness" to drunk individuals.

Pharming: We teach our children that medicine is not candy, and yet Pharming—consuming prescription substances to get a high—is a big problem among teens. Since 2003, according to the Centers for Disease Control, more overdose deaths have involved painkillers like Vicodin and Percocet

than heroin and cocaine combined. Among teens, medications prescribed for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are the most popular pharmed drugs. Don’t unwittingly contribute to a pharming party where kids raid medicine cabinets, deposit pills into big bowls and randomly ingest them. This upcoming week, April 28, is National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day . Make it a spring cleaning priority.

The most important phone number parents (and doctors) can know: