Parents who closely monitor their teens' behavior and friends can help counteract their children's genetic predisposition to an alcohol use disorder, a new study indicates.

In a previous study, lead researcher Robert Miranda, Jr. of Brown University found teens with a single difference in their genes were more predisposed to alcohol use disorders, according to HealthCanal. In the new study, Miranda found this risk was largely overcome in teenagers whose parents closely monitored their behavior, and who spent less time with 'deviant' friends.

The study included 104 teens, who were interviewed about their alcohol use, parental monitoring and friends.

They also provided a DNA sample for genetic analysis. The researchers report in Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research that 30 of the teens had the genetic variant that increased their risk of an alcohol use disorder. "The key finding of this study is that while genetics appear to play a role in the development of alcohol problems among teenagers, environmental factors can considerably reduce this risk," Miranda said in a news release.

"If you are a parent, pay closer attention to your child's whereabouts, and with whom your kids are affiliating socially, both of which can pay enormous dividends in reducing problems," added John F. Kelly, Associate Director of Massachusetts General Hospital-Harvard Center for Addiction Medicine. "Beginning an open and ongoing conversation with your child along these lines, including discussing the nature of alcohol-specific risks, could eradicate a potentially devastating problem."

Parenting isn't easy, especially when it comes to talking to children about alcohol and drugs. Many parents hope to avoid the subject entirely. Click here to learn more.