



Talk and plan around alcohol

Socialising with friends is a normal and important part of growing up for teenagers. However, parents are often concerned about the things that can happen when alcohol and other drugs are involved.

Here are some tips for parents

- **Talk to your children** and share your expectations about their use of alcohol and other drugs. Stress that drinking alcohol under 18 years of age can affect their brain development. Setting up and enforcing limits on teenagers is not easy but adolescents are less likely to drink if their parents have established clear boundaries.
- **Set a 'getting home plan' in place** before your children go out to parties and other places where alcohol may be used.
- **Talk about calling you or another responsible adult** whenever your child feels unsafe or when things get out of control.
- **Know where your children are** and get to know their friends. Have a list of your teenager's friends and their, or their parents', contact details.
- **Talk about some of the consequences** of binge drinking such as violence, verbal fights, sexual vulnerability/unsafe sex, drink driving and embarrassment.
- **Talk about how your children can avoid some of the harms from alcohol** such as:
 - Having excuses at the ready when others offer alcohol to them – *I have a music concert tomorrow and the conductor won't let me play if she knows I've been drinking.*
 - Drinking non-alcoholic or low alcohol drinks.
 - Drinking slowly.
 - Not leaving drinks unattended.
 - Being assertive and standing by their decision to not drink alcohol.
 - Avoiding topping up drinks and drinking games.
 - Avoiding driving home with people who have been drinking.
 - Avoiding walking or riding home if they have been drinking.
- **Limit their access to alcohol.** Talk about the maximum number of drinks (ie safer limits of alcohol use) you would be okay with if you think not drinking isn't a realistic option.
- **Talk about basic first aid** and what to do in an emergency. Explain that anyone who has been drinking and is unconscious should not be left alone and needs to be watched until medical assistance arrives.
- **Let your children know** that you would be more disappointed in them not seeking help than calling to tell you that they or their friends have been drinking.
-  **Use *The Other Talk* website** for more advice on talking with your children about alcohol and other drugs <http://theothertalk.org.au/>



For more information about alcohol and support services in Western Australia contact:



- Alcohol and Drug Support Line (08) 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (Country callers)
- Parent and Family Drug Support Line (08) 9442 5050 or 1800 653 203 (Country callers)
- Connect: Directory of Drug Education Support Services for Schools can be viewed at <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/sdera/detcms/navigation/for-schools/resources/connect/>