



Alcohol and your teenager

There are many good reasons why you should encourage your children not to drink alcohol while they are under 18 years. Early drinking is related to increased alcohol consumption in adolescence and young adulthood. These drinking patterns are also related to the possibility of damage to the developing brain and development of alcohol-related harms.

New guidelines about alcohol consumption and young people

The guidelines are based on the most current and best available scientific research and evidence.

- For children and young people under the age of 18 years, not drinking alcohol at all is the safest option.
- Children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking. Not drinking in this age group is especially important.
- For young people aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is to delay drinking for as long as possible.



Secondary supply of alcohol

Secondary supply generally refers to the provision of alcohol to young people under the age of 18 years by a third party. This includes parents providing alcohol to their children, or their children's friends, as well as older siblings providing alcohol to younger siblings and friends.

The 2014 Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drugs (ASSAD) survey explains that the most common places for young people to consume alcohol is in their own home (34.5%) and at parties (30%). The source of students' last alcoholic drink(s) in the last week was most commonly their friends (30.5%), their parents (30.4%) or someone else who had bought it for them (15.8%) (MHC, 2016a).

The WA Government's decision to introduce secondary supply laws to help prevent alcohol supply to under 18s will empower parents and send an important message to young people and the community.



For more information about Secondary Supply to those under 18 years of age, go to the Mental Health Commission website www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au and the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor <http://www.rgl.wa.gov.au/liquor/liquor-legislation-amendment-act/faq-s>.

Parents can influence their teenager's drinking habits positively – even if they've already started drinking.

- Talk with your teenager about how they can handle pressure from their friends to drink alcohol.
- Talk with your teenager about alcohol laws and the potential consequences of breaking the laws.
- Talk with your teenager about how the physical effects of alcohol might impact on their goals for the future.
- Children watch and copy you from an early age. Set a good example in your own use of alcohol.

