

Tips for hosting a party for teenagers.

Factors to consider to reduce alcohol related harm.

This fact sheet is designed to assist parents/caregivers in planning and hosting responsible parties with teenagers under 18 years of age. It provides tips about communicating with teenagers and factors you might consider before hosting a party or allowing your teenager to attend a party.

Alcohol can increase the risk of injury, social and mental health problems, and cause permanent damage to young people's developing brain. For these reasons, the national guidelines for alcohol consumption, states for people under 18 years of age not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

It is not the norm to provide alcohol to teens to attend parties. Very few (2.6%) parents reported that they had allowed their child to take alcohol to social events at 15 years or younger, and 65% still did not permit it when their child was 17-18 years of age.

Every party has the potential to get out-of-hand. It is important that you talk to your teenager about alcohol and take steps to plan a safe party. It is also necessary for you as a host to understand your legal responsibilities.

Tips for parents with teens attending parties

- **Know where your child is and who they're with** – take them to where they're going and pick them up. Don't leave it to someone else.
- **Always call the host parents** – speak to them and find out about supervision and whether alcohol will be provided or tolerated – you can then make an informed decision.
- **Create rules around parties early** – preferably before they start to get invited.
- **Make consequences of breaking rules clear and stick to them** – ensure they know rules are made because you love them and want them to be safe.
- **If they don't like the rules, they're most probably perfect!** Reward good behaviour and modify rules as they get older – rules should be age appropriate.

Tips to help parents talk to teenagers about parties

Communication with your teenager is vital, particularly because they can be exposed to alcohol through friends, peers and the media. Below are some tips to help you communicate with your teenager about alcohol before they attend, or you host, a party:

Be patient - Some teenagers have difficulty expressing themselves and often say things they do not mean. Try not to take what they say personally and avoid engaging in conflict or arguments.

Listen - Try and listen without interrupting. Help them to express themselves by showing a genuine interest.

Be a good role model - Be aware of your behaviour and your own attitude towards alcohol as this can have an impact on the way teenagers address their own alcohol use.

Discussing drugs and alcohol - It is important that you do not glorify your own behaviour and be careful of sounding hypocritical. Help your teenager develop strategies that will help them deal with situations where they will be offered alcohol and other drugs or put in difficult situations.

Work in collaboration - Express the reasons why you came to a particular decision. Allow your teenager the opportunity to talk about the family's rules and how they affect them.



Secondary supply laws and teenage parties

On 20 November 2015 in Western Australia new laws came into effect regarding the secondary supply of alcohol to people under the age of 18. Under this law it is an offence for anyone to supply under 18s with alcohol in a private setting without parental or guardian permission. This offence carries a maximum penalty of \$10,000.

Parents not wanting their children to drink alcohol are now able to stand firm in their decision not to provide young people with alcohol as secondary supply law means adults are legally not able to give alcohol to another person's child, on a private premise, without parental permission.

Drunk and unwell guests because of alcohol

Despite a party having a no alcohol policy, there may be guests attending that have been drinking prior to attending. As a party host you have a duty-of-care for guest's safety, and here are a few things you can put in place if guests do choose to drink alcohol prior to, and during, the party:

- Offer plenty of non-alcoholic soft drinks and have water easily accessible.
- Ensure that food is readily available for guests and is served throughout the night.

Drinking large amounts of alcohol can result in confusion, blurred vision, poor muscle control, nausea, vomiting, sleep, coma or even death. Sometimes heavy drinking results in alcohol poisoning, and this is a life-threatening emergency. Call 000 if you see these signs in someone who has been drinking:

- confusion
- vomiting
- seizures
- slow breathing (less than eight breaths a minute) or irregular breathing (a gap of more than 10 seconds between breaths)
- blue-tinged skin or pale skin
- low body temperature (hypothermia)
- difficulty remaining conscious
- passing out (unconsciousness) and can't be woken.