



New DrinkWise website gives parents the facts about kids and drinking

www.DrinkWise.com.au

DrinkWise, an evidence-based, not-for-profit research and social change organisation, has an interactive website that gives parents information and expert advice about kids and drinking. It's an accessible and comprehensive resource that helps parents and carers explore a wide range of commonly asked questions and discussion points on this important topic.

The website is divided into sections for parents-to-be; parents of children aged 0–6 years and 7–12 years; and parents of teenagers. Information is provided under five broad categories:

- Setting an example for your children.
- Discussing alcohol with your children.
- The impact of alcohol on your children.
- Peer pressure advice.
- Other parents and friends.



“The new science tells us that alcohol, as a toxin, disrupts brain development during this critical phase of growth. Teenagers who drink alcohol risk their brains not reaching full capacity, which means they might never reach their full potential as an adult.”

Professor Ian Hickie, Executive Director, The Brain and Mind Research Institute, University of Sydney

WHY KIDS AND ALCOHOL DON'T MIX

- From puberty, the brain is still developing. Alcohol can interfere with the brain reaching its full capacity in the early to mid-twenties, restricting the ability of young people to reach their full potential.
- If alcohol prevents proper brain development, many problems can occur, including a range of learning difficulties.
- Early drinking can also be dangerous by inhibiting teenagers' ability to be rational and make the right decisions.
- Early drinking can become a negative distraction for teenagers, not only from study but from sport, family life and socialising with friends.

What can parents do to help delay their children's drinking?

- Set firm family guidelines that reflect the message for children to delay their drinking (the 'delay message').
- Discuss the fact that not every teenager is drinking. Drinking too much at too young an age is not normal.
- Talk to your children about the new brain science and how alcohol can impair development.
- Encourage children to get involved in variety of activities that don't involve drinking.
- Discuss the delay message with other parents.
- Consider your own drinking behaviour. Remember that young people are influenced by the role modelling of their parents.

Concerned about your drinking?


For any parent with concerns about their own or someone else's drinking and the effects of alcohol on themselves or on families, expert advice is provided on the DrinkWise website by Dr Alex Wodak of the Alcohol and Drug Service, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney.

The National Health and Medical Research Council's 2009 guidelines for children and young people state that “not drinking at all is the safest option. Parents and carers are advised that children under 15 years of age are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking and that for this age group, not drinking is especially important.” For teenagers aged 15 to 17 years, the safest option is “to delay the initiation of drinking as long as possible.”



DrinkWise is an evidence-based, not-for-profit research and social change organisation that fosters innovative approaches towards developing and maintaining a safer drinking culture in Australia. DrinkWise relies on key independent research and clinical advice, which has informed the development of its **KIDS AND ALCOHOL DON'T MIX** campaign. Level 1, 34 Queen St, Melbourne VIC 3000
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