



**NOT DRINKING IS THE SAFEST OPTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18 YRS OF AGE.**

**ALCOHOL IS OUR MOST COMMON RECREATIONAL DRUG**

## DID YOU KNOW...?

- \* 8 out of 10 New Zealanders aged 12- 65 years reported drinking alcohol within the past year and around 1.4 million people drank at least once a week.<sup>2</sup>
- \* New Zealanders spend approximately \$85 million per week on retail alcohol sales.<sup>3</sup>
- \* About half of the drinkers under 25 years of age drink large quantities when they drink, as do about a quarter of all adult drinkers.<sup>4</sup>
- \* 1 out of 3 students reported binge drinking (5 or more standard drinks in a 4 hour period) in the past month.<sup>5</sup>
- \* Alcohol is involved in around 1 out of every 3 crimes committed in New Zealand each year.<sup>6</sup> It is also a common factor in violent and sexual assaults (including family violence), child abuse and neglect, and road crashes and other machinery accidents.
- \* Alcohol contributes to more young people dying than **any other drug**. Between 2005 and 2007, alcohol contributed to the deaths of one in four children and young people.<sup>7</sup>
- \* Alcohol is now recognised as a carcinogen (cancer causing) and is proven to raise the risk of breast cancer, mouth, throat, digestive system and liver.
- \* Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can increase the risk of miscarriage, as well as harm to your baby causing a range of lifelong effects. This range of effects is called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or FASD for short. The effects can include premature birth, brain damage and physical birth defects. The effects continue after the baby is born and can include developmental delay, learning disabilities, and social, emotional and behavioural problems.
- \* **“NO ALCOHOL” during pregnancy and breast feeding is the *safest* choice.**
- \* Pure alcohol contains 7 calories per gram or approximately 70 calories per 10 ml of pure alcohol (one standard drink measure).
- \* Drinking coffee, cold showers, drinking more alcohol, sleeping or fresh air do not sober you up. **There is NO way to increase the rate at which your body gets rid of alcohol.**

## STANDARD DRINKS

The standard drinks measure is a simple way for you to work out how much alcohol you are drinking. It reflects the amount of pure alcohol in a drink. One standard drink equals 10 grams of pure alcohol (approximately two teaspoons).

It's not the amount of liquid you are drinking that's important – it's the amount of alcohol it contains. As different types of alcoholic drinks have different amounts of alcohol in them, the number of standard drinks in each can, bottle or cask, will also vary.

It takes our bodies at least 1 hour - and sometimes much longer - to remove one standard drink from our bodies. Women absorb and metabolize alcohol differently than men. They have higher blood alcohol concentration (BAC) after consuming the same amount of alcohol as men, and are more at risk of alcoholic liver disease, heart muscle damage<sup>8</sup>, and brain damage.<sup>9</sup>

**What is a standard drink?**

Standard drinks measure the amount of pure alcohol you are drinking. One standard drink equals 10 grams of pure alcohol.

**APPROX 1.0 Standard Drinks = 10G OF ALCOHOL**

\*rtd (ready to drink)

Drink Type	Volume	Alcohol Content	Standard Drinks
330ml CAN OF BEER	330ml	4% ALC	1
100ml GLASS OF TABLE WINE	100ml	12.5% ALC	1
335ml BOTTLE OF RTD* SPIRITS	335ml	8% ALC	2.1
750ml BOTTLE OF WINE	750ml	13% ALC	7.7
1000ml BOTTLE OF SPIRITS	1000ml	47% ALC	37
3 LITRE CASK OF WINE	3 Litres	12.5% ALC	30



You'll find the standard drinks content on the label, container or packaging of each drink.

## DRINKING GUIDELINES – LOWER YOUR RISK

Drinking alcohol has both immediate and long term health effects. Because people are different – there is **no amount of alcohol that can be said to be safe for everyone**. Low risk drinking guidelines reflect the harms that might arise from single drinking occasions (where there is a risk of injury to self or others) and from the long term health consequences of regular drinking (such as increased risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, liver disease and addiction problems).

### CURRENT LONG-TERM DRINKING GUIDELINES<sup>10</sup> TO LOWER YOUR RISK ADVISE:

#### For young people:

- **Not drinking** is the safest option for young people under 18 yrs of age.
- Try to **delay drinking** for as long as possible.
- If under 18 year olds do drink, they should **always be supervised**, drink infrequently and at levels usually below and never exceeding 2 standard drinks.

#### For adults:

- 2 standard drinks a day for women and no more than 10 standard drinks a week
- 3 standard drinks a day for men and no more than 15 standard drinks a week



## ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE .... WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ?

"IT'S ONLY ALCOHOL"

"IT DIDN'T DO US ANY HARM."

"IT'S A RITE OF PASSAGE."

"KIDS ARE EXPECTED TO EXPERIMENT."

Alcohol is a huge part of kiwi culture and it would be hard to find any social gathering where alcohol does not play a significant role. Be it a christening, wedding, funeral, birthday party or dinner party, our kids see that alcohol is usually there AND often consumed in excess. Is it any wonder that they regard alcohol as important to their gatherings and celebrations as well?

Although experimenting with alcohol and other drugs can be common among teenagers, it's not always safe - or legal. So it's important to start talking about alcohol and other drugs with them from an early age and to keep talking about it as they grow up. As a parent you have a major influence on your teenager's drinking behaviour and you can help prevent them from drinking alcohol or from its' harmful use. Your influence on your their attitudes and decisions about alcohol is greatest before they start drinking.

Being such a common product it is easy to forget that alcohol is also a depressant drug that may cause serious side effects, particularly for young people. While small amounts of alcohol may be social and fun – larger amounts can be dangerous and even fatal. Alcohol affects young people differently to adults because they are still developing - physically, mentally, and emotionally. It affects the brain's ability to function efficiently and perform complex tasks such as driving, operating machines etc. This is particularly important for teenagers while they learn some of these tasks.

**EARLY DRINKING** Young people are often pressured to start drinking socially but the earlier they start the greater the chance of problems later. Research has found that **young people who started drinking alcohol before the age of 14 were more than 5 times more likely to have problems with alcohol addiction or abuse, compared to those who first used alcohol at age 21 or older.**



**THOSE UNDER 15 YEARS OF AGE ARE AT THE GREATEST RISK OF HARM FROM DRINKING AND NOT DRINKING IN THIS AGE GROUP IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT.**

**THE LAW AND SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL TO MINORS** The minimum legal age for purchasing alcohol in New Zealand is currently 18 years, but there is no legal drinking age in this country. It is however illegal for anyone under the age of 18 years (a minor) to buy alcohol. Under the new Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012, it is also illegal to supply alcohol to a person under 18 years of age unless:-

- **the supplier is the parent or legal guardian of the minor - and the alcohol is supplied in a responsible manner,**
- OR**
- **the person supplying the alcohol has the express consent of the parent or guardian of the minor (as defined in the Care of Children Act 2004), and supplies the alcohol in a responsible manner.**

Parents are encouraged to talk with other parents about alcohol and their kids. As 'a person' who has been given express consent to supply alcohol, (e.g. a parent who is organising an occasion), consideration should be given to responsible supply and hosting practices such as food provision, non-alcoholic options, the strength of alcohol supplied, arrangement for transport and the nature of the occasion. (See the "Parties' section for more ideas).

**YOUNG DRIVERS** Drivers under 20 years of age are subject to a zero-alcohol level. This means they must not drink any alcohol or they face serious penalties. For young drivers the task of driving is more demanding than for experienced drivers. Alcohol reduces your ability to pay attention when you are driving - even when you have had only a little to drink. As young drivers have to spend more of their attention to the driving task than experienced drivers, the effect of alcohol on their driving performance is greater.

**FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18 - THE SAFEST OPTION IS TO DELAY DRINKING FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.**

### If you choose to supply young people with alcohol, then ...

- \* To minimise the risk of harm to young people aged 15-17, it is best not to supply alcoholic drinks with a combined total of more than 2 standard drinks. In practise – this means just 2 regular sized cans of beer (4%) or premixed spirit (5%).
- \* You could also provide lower strength products instead, such as “light beers” of 2.5% alcohol or less. This means you could supply no more than 4 regular size cans or bottles under the current guidelines.
- \* There are also a number of non-alcoholic beers on the market that are commonly available through supermarkets and liquor outlets. These may be supplied in moderation with little risk of harm due to their minimal alcohol content.

## BINGE DRINKING

This is one of the most dangerous types of drinking and one of the most common in New Zealand. It is classed as drinking more than 5 standard drinks per occasion (usually a 4 hour period). It also refers to the rate of drinking - that is - consuming drinks in quick succession. It has also been called “drinking to get drunk” or “preloading” – which means people drink to get drunk **before** they go out on the town or to a party. In New Zealand nearly half of drinkers aged 12 to 24, usually drink more than four standard drinks on a single occasion, at least doubling their risk of injury in the six hours after drinking.

The main risks to young people from drinking too much include being involved in violence, other crimes, sexual assaults, unprotected sex, accidental injury, and alcohol poisoning (which can cause death).

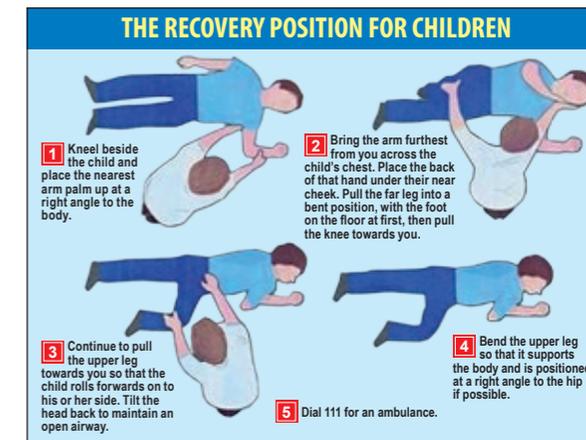
### ! IF THINGS GO WRONG...

In recent years there have been a growing number of young people who have died because they drank too much alcohol. As a result – an Auckland coroner<sup>11</sup> commented that parents and caregivers should be aware of the following ...

1. At very high levels, alcohol can cause a person to become unconscious. As a result that person has less control of their breathing and is in danger of their airway becoming blocked. That person may also throw up and breathe in the vomit - and die as a result. If your teenager becomes unconscious, **place them in the recovery position as shown to right below.**

2. **If a person becomes unconscious due to the effects of alcohol, the safest first aid treatment is to dial 111 for an ambulance.** If an ambulance is not available someone will need to keep watch over the unconscious person until they have recovered.

3. If you drink 250mls (1/4 of a 1 litre bottle) or more of 40% spirits over 30 to 60 minutes, you may have consumed a potentially fatal dose of alcohol without feeling drunk. If you then become unconscious, you will need medical assistance immediately.



**DRINKING JUST 250ML OF SPIRITS IN A SHORT PERIOD CAN KILL A TEENAGER.**



## STRATEGY: LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT DRUGS

### OTHER DRUGS

From an early age, we are given medicine (drugs) to ease the pains of colds, the flu and other childhood illnesses. We usually trust what we are given and believe that it will make us feel better. Using a drug to solve a problem becomes second nature. However, all drugs have a degree of risk connected with their use, and we need to make that very clear to our kids.

Younger children should never take any medicine without an adult knowing. They should understand that they might get hurt or become even sicker if they have too much. If we can help younger children to understand the risks from drugs – such as aspirin or antibiotics – then we are in a better position to discuss issues about alcohol and other types of drugs in their teenage years. Try to use opportunities like these to talk with your kids about the drugs you are giving them and why they should always be careful no matter what type of drug they are taking.

A useful time to talk about drugs with older kids is when they begin to ask questions or make comments about them. TV, movies, magazines, newspapers – these all provide a starting point for discussion. So is the time when they have to be given medications for illness. Whether the drugs are medicinal, legal or illegal, our children should be aware of the risks associated with their use. Get them to read the labels and read out the side effects if listed. From this – you can discuss the fact that some drugs can cause different reactions and that is why it is important to take care even when taking medicines. Make sure they understand that as with many things, a little might be good but more is not always better – and in fact could be dangerous!

### Ways to help your teens with peer pressure over alcohol or other drugs.

Talk with your teens about ways they can say no to alcohol or other drugs, without them losing face with their friends.

Suggest some ways for them to say no like: -

- ***“No ... I’m in training for my team.”***
- ***“No ... I have a big exam tomorrow.”***
- ***“No ... it makes me feel sick.”***
- ***“No ... I’m allergic to it.”***
- ***“No ... I’m happy enough without it.”***
- ***“No ... I have to be up early in the morning.”***
- ***“No ... not my scene.”***
- ***“No thanks.”***

Also discuss strategies for when their friends want to bring alcohol or other drugs in to your home. Make clear rules about this and explain your reasoning.



***“We told our daughter that she wasn’t allowed to drink alcohol or use drugs in our home with her friends. The only time she is allowed to drink at home is during a family meal or a celebration and then we as her parents decide how much is safe for her to have. Then we talked about the ways she could respond to her friends if they brought drugs or alcohol in to our house”.***



## STRATEGY:

## BE INFORMED ABOUT DRUGS

Encourage your kids to talk with you if someone is pressuring them to take drugs or alcohol. Be pleased that they want to talk with you and avoid getting angry or growling at them.

For some families, knowledge of drugs is second nature. Young people have seen their parents smoking drugs or taking pills – and sometimes this has happened for generations. But for many families, newer drugs such as “party pills” and “herbal highs” are something that they don’t know a lot about.

The internet can be a good source of information about drugs with many websites providing accurate information about the effects of various substances. The New Zealand Drug Foundation has a good home page where you might start to find out more .....

[www.drugfoundation.org.nz](http://www.drugfoundation.org.nz)

**You can also phone the free Alcohol Drug Helpline Ph 0800-787-797 for advice**

Take the opportunity to talk with other parents and share what each of you knows. Being aware of what other families are facing can be supportive when dealing with drug and alcohol issues.

Remember to keep your own prescription medicines in safe places where young people can’t get them. Abuse of prescription drugs by young people has become common overseas. If you no longer need the drugs – return them to your local pharmacy – or dispose of them safely (like flush them down the toilet).



**PARTIES ARE PART OF THE FUN IN GROWING UP AND A GOOD WAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO MIX WITH OTHERS.**

**PARTIES**