



Registered Charity 1138775

# Newsletter

## for Parents



July 2013 Ed2

Some of us can't wait for the summer holidays, others we know are dreading weeks of trying to keep the kids happy and entertained! We're focusing on two themes in this issue – things to look out for when going on holiday, or your youngsters going away with friends for the first time and how to survive teenage parties, whether holding one, or your kids heading off to house parties!

### Teenagers and Parties

The two places where teenagers drink away from home are at house parties and in public places. If planning to host a party for teenagers, or when you face your child going off to their first house party, or if you're worried about an invite, we've put together some tips shared by parents at our 'talk to kids about alcohol' sessions held in schools.



### Holding a house party

- **Think carefully** before you say yes - especially if the kids are under 15 years-old.
- **Suggest alternatives** such as going out for a pizza, bowling, the cinema, paint-balling or a shopping trip with best friends.
- **Agree the list** of invites with your teenager. If anyone has a 'reputation' for bringing booze or getting drunk then explain why you'd prefer them not to be invited. This can include you being personally responsible if something goes wrong or if anyone's hurt.
- Warn your teen about how they invite their friends – no open invitations on **facebook** or chat on **twitter**, or you may end up with **unwelcome guests!**
- **Agree the house rules** and put your teen in charge. Say if it all goes well, you'll be happy to have more parties, but never again if things get out of hand, things are broken or friends are disruptive etc.
- **Provide plenty of food** – not salty snacks, but carbs such as pizzas or wraps, mini sausages or chips. Even if they've eaten before they come, the food will be hoovered up!
- You might have to stay out of sight for your kids 'street cred', but **stick around**. It makes a big difference as to how kids behave if they know adults are there, and you'll be on hand if something goes wrong. You'll be amazed how your kid's friends will seek you out if they want a bit of a breather or are feeling a bit emotional..... have the kettle on in the kitchen and choccie biscuits to hand!



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- Some teenagers will try and sneak in alcohol in water bottles, or mixed with soft drinks so be prepared and work out how you'll handle this. Have loads of soft drinks and iced water available. There are some great alcohol free beers and ciders available now too.
  - If anyone is sick or ill, contact their parents and never leave them unattended. [Click here](#) for tips on what to do if things do go wrong.
  - **If it goes well, don't forget to tell your teen how proud you are of them and their mates.**
  - If it's possible try and have a few **diversion games** around, such as chocolate roulette, twister, giant jenga or a table tennis table or basketball hoop if outside - it helps distract and can be an icebreaker.
  - **Try and avoid big sleepovers**, as the kids won't get much sleep (or you probably) and you won't know what's going on once you're in bed!
  - Finally, make sure you've **warned your neighbours** and have a reasonable finish time, allowing parents to pick up and get to bed too!

## Going to parties

Out of sight out of mind? Set the ground rules as carefully as you can to ensure your child stays safe at other people's parties...



- **Speak to the host parents**, even if you don't know them. Tell your child you're not prepared to let them go otherwise. Check an adult will be present and their policy on alcohol.
- If you can, **drop your teenager off and pick them up**, or share lifts with parents you trust. Agree a pick up time and ensure your child has a fully charged mobile that they keep on.
- If sleeping over after a party at another friend's house, **check plans are genuine** - speak to the parents. Ask your child to ring or text you when they're safely at their friend's house.
- Make sure your teenager has had a **good meal before they go out**, such as pasta. If they do drink, it means that alcohol is absorbed much more slowly into the blood stream and you tend to drink more slowly after you've eaten.
- Be prepared to say 'no' if you're unhappy about a party or if your child doesn't want you to speak to the host - there'll be rows, but it's because you care, not because you're being a killjoy.
- **Don't feel pressured by younger teens to provide them with alcohol to take** with them to parties. They may tell you everyone else's parents do this, but that's just not true or, threaten you that they'll ask their mates to buy it for them instead (explain they risk their friend being fined or charged).
- If your teen breaks your agreement, such as what time to be home, then make sure you **carry through your threats**, such as grounding them or stopping their spending money for a month.



Download and print a handy A4 flyer on hosting teenage parties, or your teens going to parties and how to keep them safe from the [Family Talk UK Facebook page](#) and join the community of parents to discuss the often tricky subject of children and responsible drinking.

Plus see more at: [www.alcholeducationtrust.org/Parents/parties](http://www.alcholeducationtrust.org/Parents/parties)



## Sun, Sea and Summer Holidays – teens going away with friends on their own for the first time?

If your kids have finished their exams and are going away for sun, sea and a fun time, it can be very nerve racking as parents.

Simple pacing strategies if they plan to drink will help to ensure that they have a fantastic holiday such as

- drink lots of water
- avoid shots and rounds
- keep an eye out for friends
- be aware of local laws and customs
- remember that foreign measures are often much larger and stronger than those at home.
- Finally, remind them that alcohol isn't part of everyone's holiday plans, so respect the wishes of friends who don't or may not want to drink

## Top tips for you and them

- If travelling by air, especially on long flights don't be tempted to drink too much, even if it is free! Water and soft drinks are a better choice as both alcohol and altitude dehydrate you. Many airlines won't let you fly if you appear drunk or unruly at check in.
- Once on holiday, alcohol dehydrates you, and the heat of the sun makes it worse. Take regular breaks, slap on plenty of sun cream and drink at least a litre of water a day.
- Bars abroad often serve larger measures of spirits than at home so just two vodkas could be the same as four or five at home.
- Alcohol can make you feel relaxed and less careful about sun cream, falling asleep in the sun or on a lilo in the pool. Scarily, malignant skin cancer has increased by 56% among men and 38% among women since 2002 in the UK.
- Don't let too much drink lead them into risky situations, with strangers, swimming pools or unknown places. Watch out for passports, credit cards, phones, tablets or



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ipods that can be easily lost or stolen if they're worse for wear - it may be better to leave them somewhere secure and just keep enough cash with them when out.

- Mixing drink with sports, from volleyball to rock climbing, can lead to injuries. So play it safe. Likewise, midnight swimming and drinking is never advisable. Insurance may be invalid if drunk at the time of the incident.

## Driving abroad?

Nearly all countries have lower drink drive limits than the UK and some, such as the US don't allow any alcohol at all for those under 21. You can look at the permitted levels around the world via <http://www.drinkingandyou.com/site/uk/drive.htm>

Decide before going out who is the designated driver who won't drink. It's their job to make sure everyone gets home safely.

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## Follow us on Twitter and Facebook



As well as a dedicated parents' area on our website [www.alcoholeducationtrust.org](http://www.alcoholeducationtrust.org) which is full of tips and advice for parents, you can also now find us on [twitter](#) and [facebook](#). By following @AETparenthelp and/or 'liking' the Alcohol Education Trust facebook page - you will receive regular information and tips to support you to support your youngsters. In today's busy world, having these reminders as part of your mobile device applications will help to keep this important issue at the forefront of everyday life.

For further information on any of the above please contact

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