

Slide 1



Keeping Your Child Safe:
Alcohol

Alcohol

Slide 2

"It's ok for my child to have to the occasional drink of alcohol. I just don't want them using drugs"

Alcohol is a drug

Alcohol

Alcohol has been and is still very much part of British culture. Not only is it used to celebrate special occasions e.g. birthdays, weddings etc but also used for pleasure, fun and to help us unwind. Due to its high use and social acceptance by adults we can sometimes forget that alcohol is a drug too and when misused can be extremely dangerous to an individual. Alcohol misuse can also impact on families and local community.

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Areas for concern

Crime: Criminal damage and anti social behaviour caused by young people under the influence of alcohol.

Health: Admission to A&E, mental and physical development

Sexual Health/Teenage Pregnancy: Young people having sex whilst under the influence of alcohol.

Adults: Buying alcohol for young people

Parents: Unaware of the strength of some alcoholic drinks

Alcohol

Young people also have access to alcohol - drinking at parties, friend's houses, in the park - quite often drinking to get drunk. Young people see alcohol on sale all around them, in supermarkets, off-licences, pubs and restaurants. They might also see their parents drinking alcohol. This can make it difficult for them to understand that alcohol can be dangerous.

The number of teenagers trying drink in their early teens is growing, often influenced by their peers, the media and advertising. The worry for parents is that it can also be linked to risky teenage behaviour such as unprotected or early sex.

There are some other concerns within Hertfordshire that have been identified by local services including the police; health and education (refer to slide). Some of these concerns will be raised in this presentation.

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National Data

54% of 15-16 year olds having drunk more than 5 drinks on a single occasion in the last 30 days *(Hibell 2004)*.

87% of 11-15 year olds who had tried to purchase alcohol at a pub or bar were successful as were 73% who tried to buy from a shop. *(Bates et al., 2005)*

Alcohol

 *There is no need to go into detail with regards to each piece of data.*

Highlight key points – the amount of young people drinking, how the alcohol is purchased, links to criminal activity, affect on schooling and other risky behaviour.

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18% of 12-13 year olds and 28% of 14-15 year olds reported damaging or destroying things after drinking *(Honest, Seymour and Webster 2000)*.

4% of 14 – 15 year olds reported having problems at school as a result of drinking *(Newcombe et al, 1995)*.

Around 40% of 13 and 14 year olds were 'drunk or stoned' when they first experienced sexual intercourse *(Wright, 2000)*.

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Local data

Primary Schools

- 18% of boys and 10% of girls said they had at least one alcoholic drink (more than just a sip) in the last week.
- 77% of primary pupils don't drink alcohol.
- 2% of pupils reported that they drink alcohol without their parents knowing at least sometimes.
- 19% of pupils reported that their parents always knew if they drank alcohol.

Alcohol

The information listed here has been collected from local primary and secondary school within Hertfordshire. 90 Primary Schools and 23 Secondary Schools took part in this survey.

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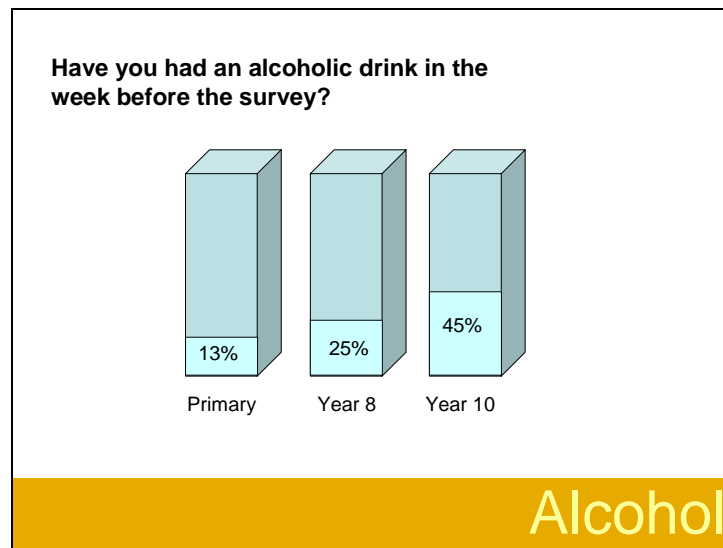
Local data

Secondary Schools

- 25% of Year 8 boys and 45% of Year 10 boys had at least one unit of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 25% of Year 8 girls and 44% of Year 10 girls had at least one unit of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 6% of those pupils bought the alcohol from an off-licence that should only sell to over-eighteens.

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This information clearly shows how the amount of alcohol drunk increases between Year 8 and Year 10. One reason for this could be that parents believe their child is becoming mature enough to drink alcohol under supervision. 23% of Year 8 and Year 10 said they drank at home.

There is a similar pattern of young people smoking within these age groups, therefore, other reasons may include experimenting, fitting in with their peers, rebellion.

If there is a similar pattern in relation to other drugs then it is important to make sure that young people are provided with information regarding the risks associated with alcohol. They will also need the skills and attitudes required to feel comfortable to enjoy themselves without drinking or refuse alcohol offered by their friends. This information should be provided not only in school but within the home.


There is little research on ethnic, cultural and religious differences regarding alcohol and young people; however, alcohol consumption is lower amongst young people from ethnic groups compared to white young people. Attitudes towards alcohol are also more negative and less tolerant compared than those of their white friends.

Should I let my child drink?


For young people, who come in all shapes and sizes, and whose bodies may still be developing, risk-free drinking does not exist. Not only sex, build and weight, but also physical tolerance, experience of drinking and the context in which it takes place are all crucial factors which affect young people's drinking experiences

(Royal College of Physicians, 1995).

Alcohol


 *Parents know their child better than anyone else so it is their decision if they want their child drink alcohol. However, this should not only be based on their experiences as each situation is different. There may also be religious or cultural reasons why they choose for their child not to drink.*

Deciding whether you should let your child drink alcohol is a personal decision that only you can make, however, it is important to make this decision based on fact and not simply your own experiences as each situation is different. What maybe a positive experience for you may not be the same for your child. This issue is summed up in this statement by the Royal College of Physicians.

 *Ask the group for their views on the statement “risk free drinking does not exist amongst young people”*

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Should I let my child drink? It's up to you to decide whether your child is allowed to drink and if so how much. But.....
•Make sure they understand the positive and negative sides associated with alcohol.
•Show your children that its possible to enjoy yourself without drinking. It's OK not to drink!
Do you know the recommended daily limit for drinking alcohol? Make sure you know how strong different brands are.
•Set clear boundaries on what is acceptable regarding alcohol consumption and/or behaviour and stick to it.
Alcohol

 *Under what conditions (if any) would you let your child drink alcohol?*

If you do decide to let you child drink then here are some other points to consider:

- Make sure they understand the positive and negative sides associated with alcohol.
- Show your children that it's possible to enjoy yourself without drinking. It's OK not to drink!
- Do you know the recommended daily limit for drinking alcohol? Make sure **you** know how strong different brands are.
- Set clear boundaries on what is acceptable regarding alcohol consumption and/or behaviour and stick to it.

Slide 11

Talking about alcohol

- Potential dangers - from health to safety
- How they may feel or what they may do under pressure
- Alcohol can influence people's judgment
- How it might feel to regret something the next day
- Alcohol affects people in different ways
- Alcohol can make some people aggressive
- Keeping safe and walking away from trouble
- What to do in an emergency
- Your own attitudes to alcohol

Taken from www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Alcohol

 Also see Slide 15 in Drug presentation and teaching notes.

It is important for young people to get the right information about alcohol in order for them to make healthy choices and reduce risky situations associated with alcohol.

Here is a selection of issues that could be raised.

You'll know when it's time to speak to your child about alcohol, but it might be earlier than you think. Even young children might start asking questions about things they've heard at school. Don't leave them to pick up information from their friends or TV.

Give them accurate information; make sure they know your views so they know where they stand with you.

Keep communication channels open by taking an interest in their day and what they're learning at school. Make it clear that their safety and wellbeing are important to you.

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If you fear your child is drinking a lot:

Try not too panic.

Accusing, arguing or threatening won't help.

Wait until you are calm and they are sober, before talking about your concerns.


Encourage them to tell you what's happening.

Ensure you have support for yourself as well as your child.

Don't expect instant results. Drinking may be covering up other problems.

Alcohol

There are also national and local services that can offer support and guidance. These will be listed at the end of the presentation.


 *If external agencies are attending the event, please ensure that participants know where they are situated and the purpose for them being there, e.g. answers question about alcohol, provide leaflets and other resources.*

Emergency Situations:

Try to keep the young person sitting up or put them in the recovery position.

Stay with them.

If they lose consciousness (e.g. they don't wake up, respond to their name) call 999 immediately.



Recovery position

Alcohol

Alcohol poisoning is extremely dangerous. It can lead to coma and in extreme cases death. The amount of alcohol it takes to cause alcohol poisoning depends on many factors, including size, weight and age. Teenagers and inexperienced drinkers are particularly vulnerable.

It is important for your children (and their friends) to know what to do in an emergency and not be fearful of calling emergency services when a serious incident happens.

Slide 14

What is a unit?

ADULTS are advised by the Department of Health to drink no more than:

- 2 to 3 units **per day** for a women
- 3 to 4 units **per day** for a man

•Under 18's should drink well below these amounts, if at all.
•There is no known safe amount for children.

Alcohol

💡 *How many people in the audience know what a 'unit' of alcohol is?*

For those who drink, alcohol is something to be enjoyed. Most of the time, drinking doesn't cause any problems but drinking too much or at the wrong time can be harmful. The important thing is to know where the benefits end and the risks begin.

The Department of Health advises that men should not regularly drink more than 3 - 4 units of alcohol per day, and women should not regularly drink more than 2 - 3 units of alcohol per day. After an episode of heavy drinking it is advisable to refrain from drinking for 48 hours to allow your body to recover. A unit of alcohol is 10ml of pure alcohol. Counting units of alcohol can help us to keep track of the amount we're drinking.

Women who are trying to become pregnant or are at any stage of pregnancy, should avoid alcohol. If they choose to drink they should not drink more than 1 or 2 units of alcohol once or twice a week, and should avoid episodes of intoxication.

It's not OK to save these up for the weekend.

💡 *How many people in the audience know how many 'units' of alcohol an under 18's can drink?*

- Under 18's should drink well below these amounts, if at all. There is no known safe amount for children.

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- 1 pint of Strongbow Cider beer = **3 units**
- 1 pint of Stella Artois = **3 units**
- 1 large glass of white wine (250ml, 12%ABV) = **3 units**
- 1 bottle of Budwiser (440ml) = **2.2 units**
- 1 large single glass of Jack Daniels (35ml) = **1.4 units**
- Bacardi Breezer (275ml) = **1.4 units**
- 1 large single glass of Smirnoff (35ml) = **1.3 units**

Alcohol

From this list you can see how easily you and your child could consume well over the daily benchmark.

As stated before there is no known safe amount for children under the age of 18 years.

It is also important to remember the statement from the Royal College of Physicians who said that due to age, sex, build and weight plus physical tolerance and the context in which alcohol is used, it is difficult to say that drinking alcohol is 'risk free'.

 *Are there any surprises or comments from this slide?*

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If you would like further information about units there is an online unit calculator that can work out units for you. The website address is **www.drinkaware.co.uk**

Slide 17

Spiking Drinks


Studies shows:

People (male and female) under the influence of alcohol are more at risk of being the victim (and perpetrator) of attacks, robberies, muggings and sexual assaults.


Victims of drug assisted sexual assault are likelier to be incapacitated by **alcohol** than other substances.

These studies do not substantiate the belief that 'date rape' drugs are being used on a large scale across the UK.

Alcohol

 You may consider removing Slides 17 and 18, which refer to Spiking Drinks depending on the relevance to the audience you are presenting to.

This information has been included as many parents have concerns based on stories reported in the media. There have been increasing studies undertaken to try and see if the prevalence of spiking drinks matches what is reported in the media. This slide shows some of the results already identified.

 *Stress that the findings from these reports do not seek to deny or neutralise the incidence of drug-facilitated sexual assault (drink spiking) and that rape is an appalling crime, which is never the victim's fault. Any incident should always be reported to the police immediately.*

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Spiking Drinks

Two possible explanations for the high levels of alcohol detected:

- drinks are being spiked with additional alcohol
- people are underestimating the effects of alcohol or unaware of the amounts they consume

Alcohol

This shows again that in some cases young people are simply unaware of the strength of alcohol and how it can effect their actions and that of those around them.


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Local and national help and support

- Parentline Plus** 0808 800 22 22
- Parental Drug Awareness Service (PDAS)** 01707 393 934
- A-DASH (Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Service)** 01923 427 288
Text – 07770 537227

For more information on other local alcohol services within Hertfordshire please contact **Drinkline on 0800 917 8282**

Alcohol

 *You may want to consider printing this page out if no further information is available.*