

# Teaching your teens to drink alcohol responsibly ...

## IS IT A GOOD IDEA?



### Parents feel pressured

to try to teach their teens to drink responsibly. Alcohol is heavily promoted in New Zealand, so many parents feel that their teens will be able to access it easily, and that it is inevitable they will drink alcohol.

### It's risky

Drinking alcohol affects brain development and learning ability for teens under 18, as well as increasing chances of injury, assault and risky sexual behaviour.

For under-18s, Ministry of Health advice is that not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

Those under 15 are at the greatest risk of harm from drinking alcohol. Not drinking is especially important for them.

For young people the safest option is to delay drinking for as long as possible.

15-17-year-olds who do drink alcohol should be supervised, only drink occasionally, and never more than 2 standard drinks.

Becoming intoxicated at a young age is a strong predictor of having problems with alcohol as an adult. \*

\* Newton-Howes et al (2019) Comparison of age of first drink and age of first intoxication as predictors of substance use and mental health problems in adulthood. Drug and Alcohol Dependence Vol 194, 238-243

## It's important to make a plan

Talk with your teens. A growing number of them are choosing not to drink. It's illegal to provide alcohol to under-18s unless you have express consent from their parent or legal guardian (eg: text, email, or phone call)

AND you supply it in a responsible way.

Supervision is important; parents and caregivers need to check who will be there to supervise any drinking.

**Find out more at [www.the-plan.nz](http://www.the-plan.nz)**

**THE PLAN** Delay teen drinking.  
Make a plan & stick with it.

