

There is growing evidence that alcohol causes specific damage to young people's brains.

Many teachers agree; they see alcohol having a significant impact on some students' performance.

Although most teenage drinkers are given their alcohol by family and friends, it's actually illegal to give alcohol to anyone under 18 except in specific circumstances.

As a parent you can help your teenager understand the damage alcohol can do and support them to delay drinking alcohol, particularly before they turn 18.



For more information:

The www.alcohol.org.nz website has advice for parents and caregivers, including the booklet *Alcohol and your kids*.

The Australian *alcohol think again* website www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au has useful information and videos for parents and young people.

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Te Whatu Ora

**Should I give my
teenager alcohol?**

Alcohol and Your Teenager



For under-18s no alcohol is the safest choice. If you do choose to give your teenager alcohol, only give small amounts, and make sure you, or people you know and trust, are watching them when they drink it.

It helps to be a good role model yourself, and to talk to your teenager and to other parents about alcohol.



If you do give alcohol to your teenager, you must follow the law.

The law in New Zealand says:

- ⇒ You must not give alcohol to someone under 18 unless you are their parent or guardian, or you have their parent or guardian's express consent ("express consent" isn't defined in the law, but it may include a personal conversation, an email or a text message that you are confident is genuine).
- ⇒ If you do give alcohol to your teenager before they are 18 (or to another teenager under 18 with their parent or guardian's consent) you must provide it "in a responsible manner". This includes:
 - making sure they're supervised drinking the

alcohol;

- providing food and a choice of low-alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks;
- arranging or providing safe transport.

- ⇒ Also consider the type of occasion, the time period, the strength and amount of alcohol, and the age of the teenager.
- ⇒ A person under 18 must not drink alcohol in a public place or be in possession of alcohol for drinking there unless they're with their parent or guardian.
- ⇒ Drivers aged under 20 have a zero alcohol limit.

