



There is no sure way to prevent your child from experimenting with drugs but you can decrease the chances if you:

- **Maintain good communication with your child. Make sure they know they can talk to you if they have any concerns or issues.**
- **Be interested in their activities and know who their friends are. Help with homework and give them lifts to and from sports and other activities.**
- **Make sure your own use of alcohol or other drugs is responsible. The best way to influence their behavior is by example.**
- **Inform yourself about drugs.**
- **Praise and encourage healthy behavior.**
- **Have positive expectations for your children.**
- **Have open discussions with your child from a young age about drug use: what they would do if offered drugs, explore examples, positives and negatives of use.**
- **Talk time to encourage them not to drink or smoke. Research shows the longer you can delay this the less likely they are to use illegal drugs.**



Think about how your own drinking behaviour may impact on your children's attitude to alcohol

Do you ever	Situation	Possible message to your child
Drink to relax or relieve stress?	After a hard day at work the first thing you do is open a bottle of wine or beer.	Could your child see alcohol as an adult way to relieve stress or anxiety and think drinking would be a grown up way of coping with exam pressure or other difficulties in their life?
Drink to get drunk?	You tend to use alcohol to get drunk and don't pay much attention to recommended guidelines.	Would your child think alcohol is for getting drunk and that advice on recommended daily guidelines is meaningless and can just be ignored?
Joke about being drunk?	You enjoy having a joke about things you or others have done while drunk.	Could your child think you approve of people getting drunk and doing silly things? Might they think if you find it funny when people get drunk, you won't mind too much if they do it?
Ignore your own advice?	You've advised your child about the risks associated with drinking too much, but when it comes to your own drinking you ignore this advice.	Could your child think guidelines and boundaries around drinking aren't important and don't need to be kept to?



PASTORAL RESPONSE
TO SUBSTANCE MISUSE

RATE MY DRINKING

Many people across Ireland drink alcohol. Some drink too much! You may think the way you drink is fine. Maybe you get the odd hangover or sometimes do something you wouldn't do sober.

**YOUR
SCORE**

These three questions can tell you a bit more about your drinking.

<p>1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?</p> <p>Never (0) Less than monthly (1) 2-4 times a month (2) 2-3 times a week (3)</p> <p>4 or more times a week (4)</p>	
<p>2. How many standard drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?</p> <p>1 or 2 (0) 3 or 4 (1) 5 or 6 (2) 7 to 9 (3) 10 or more (4)</p>	
<p>3. How often do you have 6 or more drinks on one occasion?</p> <p>Never (0) Less than monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)</p>	
<p>TOTAL SCORE</p>	

WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE MEAN?

A score of over **5** for a man or **4** for a woman may be a concern and worth a closer look.

It may mean you occasionally drink too much. It may also be your regular pattern is excessive and increase risk.

Is it time to think about how much you drink? If so, then fill in the next questionnaire. It will tell you a little more about you're drinking. See what this score means and the choices you have to address it.

**If your score concerns you please take the Risk
Questionnaire**

RISK

Please circle your answer, for each question, enter your score in the column box and then add your total score at the bottom.

	Your Score
1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? Never (0) Less than monthly (1) 2-4 times a month 2-3 times a week (3) 4 or more times a week (4)	
2. How many standard drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking 1 or 2 (0) 3 or 4 (1) 5 or 6 (2) 7 to 9 (3) 10 or more (4)	
3. How often do you have 6 or more drinks on one occasion? Never (0) Less than Monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)	
4. How often during last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you started? Never (0) Less than monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)	
5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking? Never (0) Less than monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)	
6. How often during the last year have you needed a drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session? Never (0) Less than monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)	
7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking? Never (0) Less than monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)	
8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking? Never (0) Less than monthly (1) Monthly (2) Weekly (3) Daily or almost daily (4)	
9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking? No (0) Yes , but not in the last year (2) Yes, during the last year (4)	
10. Has a relative, friend, doctor or health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested that you should cut down? No (0) Yes, but not in the last year (2) Yes, during the last year (4)	



This questionnaire was developed using the World Health Organisation publication (2001) Research has shown it to be a good indicator of how harmful/risky a person's drinking is.



ASSESSMENT

What do these levels mean ?

0 - 7

8 – 15

16 – 19

20 +

Low Risk

Hazardous

High Risk

Highest Risk

What do these levels mean?

Low Risk: Not Likely to cause serious harm to health.

Harzadous: Increased risk of harm to health and adverse impact on life

High Risk: Drinking at this level will eventually result in physical or psychological harm to health if not already doing so. There is also likely to be a negative impact on life and a high risk of dependence.

Highest Risk: Definite harm to physical and psychological health and adverse impact on life. Likely dependant

Other questions you may want to ask yourself:

Circle YOUR appropriate number 1 - 10

Q. How important is it for me to do something about my drinking?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not important

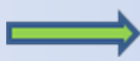


very important

Q. In the next 3 months, how difficult will I find it to cut down on my drinking or stop all together?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Easy



Very Hard

**If your score concerns you discuss it with your
GP or the services available on back of
assessment**



What are your next steps?

There are several choices for you if your score concerns you. Whatever you decide is up to you.

Low Risk (0-7) Aim to keep your drinking at low risk levels

Risky or Hazardous (8-15) Reduce your drinking to healthier levels.

High Risk (16-19) Cut down or consider stopping, even for a while

Highest Risk (20+) Acknowledge that your drinking is putting your health at serious risk and having a negative impact on your life. Contact your GP for help and if required access to treatment for dependency.

If you are concerned about your drinking please contact your GP or one of the services below

The Health Service Executive (HSE)

www.yourdrinking.ie provides information on how to enjoy alcohol while protecting your health, relationships and community. The HSE infoline 1850 24 1850 is open Monday to Saturday from 8am to 8pm and can provide you with contact numbers for supports and services in your local area. If you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child living with parental alcohol problems, you can call this number to get the contact details for your local social work team.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others recover from their alcoholism. For further information phone (01) 8420700, Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 5.00pm or e-mail gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie



What are the factors that help teenagers delay drinking?

- ✓ **Clear messages from parents that underage drinking is unacceptable**
- ✓ **Clear example from parents about how to drink responsibly**
- ✓ **Praise and encouragement from parents**
- ✓ **Strong relationships with their family, friends and teachers**
- ✓ **Good social skills**
- ✓ **Involvement in school, youth groups, sports or church activities**

Four things you can do to delay teenage drinking

1. Talk and listen to your teenager – it is the greatest support you can give them.

- **Know the facts about alcohol**
- **Talk to your teenager about alcohol in a calm, matter-of-fact way.**
- **Listen to your teenager. They will have their own stories and beliefs about alcohol. You need to hear these.**
- **Use everyday opportunities to bring up the subject, for example a storyline in a TV programme.**
- **Make your feelings about underage drinking very clear. Some parents suggest that talking to another adult in the company of a teenager is a useful way of getting the message across.**
- **Spend time with your teenager, for example if they are involved in sport go to a match together.**
- **Be available to talk.**

2. Have family rules

- **Discuss the rules with everyone.**
- **Be clear about what is allowed or not allowed, for example they are not allowed attend teenage parties where alcohol is served.**
- **Have “coming home” times and stick to them.**
- **Have consequences for breaking rules and stick with them.**
- **Do not make empty threats or impose harsh punishments.**

3. Know where your teenager is

- **Are they where they say they are? If they say they are staying in a friend’s house, check.**
- **Will there be a supervising adult there?**
- **Who are they with?**
- **What time are they coming home at?**
- **How are they getting home?**
- **How much money do they have?**

4. If you drink alcohol, be responsible. Think about your own drinking.

- **How much do you drink?**
- **Why do you drink?**
- **Do you need to cut down?**
- **What rules do you have about your drinking (for example, not drinking and driving)?**
- **Know how much alcohol is in the house and check it regularly.**

Calorie content of alcoholic beverages:

- Pub measure of spirits (35ml) – 80 calories
- Small glass of wine (100 mls) – 80 calories
- A glass of lager/cider (284 mls) – 90 calories

Men

It is recommended that men drink no more than 2 ½ standard drinks a day maximum. No more than 17 standard drinks per week.

Women

It is recommended that women drink no more than 1 ½ standard drinks a day maximum. No more than standard drinks per week.

Pregnancy

Drinking alcohol when pregnant can seriously damage the development of the unborn baby.

Remember that:

- It takes one hour for an adult body to process 1 standard drink
- For each standard drink over the daily limit, the risk to your health increases.
- It is important to spread the standard drinks throughout the week – you can't "save up" your standard drinks for the weekend or a party.

Over half of all Irish drinkers have a harmful pattern of drinking, that's

- 4 in 10 women who drink
- 7 in 10 men who drink

The effects of alcohol

Many people enjoy a drink without any problems. Binge drinking or drinking heavily over longer periods of time can have very serious consequences. Alcohol misuse not only harms the individual but is

damaging to relationships and society in general in terms of violence and crime, accidents and drink driving.

Short-term effects

The short term risks of alcohol (and other drug use) include risk of injury, loss of possessions, relationship problems, time away from school or work and perhaps in trouble with the law.

Long – term effects

As well as the recognised immediate effects of drinking too much, like nausea/vomiting, binge drinking and prolonged heavy drinking over longer periods of time can result in a range of problems including;

- **Brain damage**
- **Cancers**
- **Heart & circulation problems**
- **Liver cirrhosis**
- **Stomach ulcers/gastritis**
- **Inflammation of the pancreas**
- **High blood pressure**

Mental health problems

While people may think alcohol helps them to cope with difficult situations and emotions, to reduce stress or relieve anxiety, alcohol is in fact associated with a range of mental health problems, including depression.

Excessive drinking can also disrupt normal sleeping patterns resulting in insomnia and a lack of restful sleep which can contribute to stress and anxiety.

