Hosting teenage parties: Managing alcohol & other drugs

Drugs in focus
Hosting teenage parties: Managing alcohol & other drugs

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Introduction

It is important for young people to have fun, celebrate and learn social skills, but no one wants drunken behaviour, property damage, personal injury and gate crashers.

When their teenagers ask to have a party, many parents agree before they have had a chance to think it through. There are many issues to consider before you agree to host a party.

As the parent, you will be the host, and it is important that you take responsibility for the party. This means that you will need to do all that you reasonably can to provide a safe environment, protect your guests (young people as well as adults), and help them avoid trouble. This is sometimes referred to as your “duty of care”.

Hosting teenage parties: Managing alcohol and other drugs considers questions such as:

- What do I do when my teenager wants to have a party?
- What kind of party should we host?
- How should I supervise the party?
- Should I allow alcohol to be consumed at the party?
- If I allow alcohol, should I provide it or should it be BYO?
- What are my obligations and responsibilities, including to other parents?
- Should smoking be allowed at the party?
- What about other drugs?

On page 22 we provide a party checklist to help you to plan and organise your party, and the recipes for non-alcoholic cocktails (page 23) provide some fun and tasty alternatives.

While there are many issues to consider when hosting a party for your teenager, don’t be daunted — a party is a great way to provide opportunities for young people to have fun, safely.

The Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) thanks the following organisations for assistance with the first edition of this booklet:

Youth Legal Service WA; Drug Education Training, Victoria Police; Queensland Police Service, Proserpine; Legal Aid WA; National Children’s Youth Law Centre; Redfern Legal Service; City of Yarra; Drug & Alcohol Services Council SA; Family Drug Support; New South Wales Police Service, Wollongong; Caxton Legal Centre Qld; Liquor Licensing Commission Victoria.

ExxonMobil’s partnership with ADF

The ExxonMobil Australia group of companies actively supports community projects in areas in which it operates, and has been a corporate partner with the ADF for more than 7 years.

ExxonMobil Australia congratulates the ADF on developing the Drugs in Focus series of booklets for parents, which cover the following topics:

- Alcohol and other drugs: A guide for parents
- Parent focus: Dealing with drug issues for 9 to 14-year-olds
- Hosting teenage parties: Managing alcohol and other drugs
- Teenage drinking: The facts and issues
- Young people and drugs: The facts and issues

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The ADF is grateful to ExxonMobil Australia for its generous support in developing the Drugs in Focus series of resources for parents.

Spend some time with your teenager planning the party together.
Teenagers, alcohol and parties

Deciding to host a party

Deciding whether to hold a party and, if you do, what kind of party, will be easier if you are clear about your teenager’s expectations as well as the expectations of the friends they will be inviting and their parents. This section outlines some information about teenage drinking and some suggestions about how to find out about what happens at teenage parties in your area.

What goes on at teenage parties?

As with just about everything else these days, trends in teenage parties change. Parties also vary according to the age of the teenagers who attend, where you live, the type of party and the venue you choose. Alcohol and other drugs may not be a big issue for younger teenagers, but may become an issue for older teens. Your teenager will probably be able to give you some good background information about his or her social group, “who hangs out with whom” and what goes on when they get together. Of course, you may not be told everything, but the more you are able to pick up, the more aware you are, and the better position you will be in when it comes to planning the party.

If your teenager has friends who have parties, you may be able to learn a lot by speaking to the parents about their experiences.

How common is it for teenagers to drink alcohol?

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey in 2004 found that about a third (27.7 per cent) of 14 to 19-year-old Australians had never had a full glass of alcohol. However, nearly the same proportion (24.4 per cent) were drinking alcohol on a weekly basis.1

Of the 14 to 19-year-old Australians who had consumed alcohol in the year prior to the survey:

- 10 per cent drank alcohol at levels considered risky to their health in the long term1
- 27.6 per cent drank levels considered risky for harm in the short term, at least once a month.1

The survey also reported that the most common place where 14 to 19-year-old Australians consumed alcohol was at private parties (70.5 per cent).2

Why do teenagers drink?

Young people use alcohol for the same reasons as adults. Most people drink alcohol to relax, have fun, to be part of a group, out of curiosity, or to escape from physical or psychological pain. Drinkers, including young drinkers, value drinking for its perceived short-term benefits, they do not drink alcohol to feel bad or get hurt.

Curiosity, experimentation, taking risks and wanting excitement are a part of growing up. In searching for their own identity, teenagers may want to try something to see if it is part of the person they want to be. As adults, when we respond to alcohol issues with our teenagers, we may need to remind ourselves that once we, too, were young and desperate to grow up and be recognised as a person in our own right; we wanted to make our own decisions and make our own mistakes.3

For more information about teenagers, alcohol and other drug issues, contact the alcohol and drug information service in your state or territory (see the back cover of this booklet).

What are the laws about young people drinking alcohol at a party?
Across Australia there are special laws about alcohol and people aged under 18 years. These laws vary in each state and territory and depend on where your party is held.
For example:
- **In a private home** — it is not illegal for a person aged under 18 years to drink alcohol in their own home. However, in some states and territories it is an offence to supply other people's children with alcohol unless the parent or guardian of the young person has authorised them to do this.
- **On licensed premises (such as pubs, bars, reception centres etc.)** — people aged under 18 years are forbidden to drink alcohol on licensed premises in some states and territories. In some states and territories it is illegal for those under 18 to enter the licensed premises at all unless they are with a parent, guardian or spouse and having a meal. It is up to the licensee to make sure these laws are not broken.
- **In parks, on beaches or piers, in hired halls and in other public places** — there are state and territory laws and local council regulations about the consumption of alcohol. If you hire a hall, you will be asked to sign a contract that sets out what is allowed. You should contact the police and your local council or shire before organising a party at one of these venues.
Always check the laws in your area with your local police, community legal service, or council or shire office.

What are the laws about cannabis and other illegal drugs?
Cannabis is illegal in Australia, but the specific laws and penalties for possession and use of cannabis varies across the states and territories. There are also laws and penalties for selling cannabis.
Examples of other illegal drugs include amphetamines ("speed", "ice"), cocaine, heroin and ecstasy. It is illegal to possess, use, make or sell these drugs.

If a young person has used illegal drugs at your party, or has seen other teenagers use illegal drugs at your party, and at some later time they themselves get into trouble with drugs, they or their parents might want to lay some blame on you as the host. The parents of the teenager in this situation would need to show that you supported or condoned young people breaking the law. It is important to note that they would have a stronger legal case if they could show that you were consuming an illegal drug yourself at the party.
For information about laws on illegal drugs in your state or territory, contact your local community legal centre or police station.

Your responsibilities as the host
As the parent of a teenager having a party, you are legally considered the host of the party. Therefore, you need to be well informed about the legal and insurance implications of hosting a party. For example, you need to find out about the laws in your state or territory regarding young people and alcohol and other drugs, acceptable noise levels and information about your responsibility to provide a safe environment.
Local police are now actively involved in “party safe” programs and will be most willing to provide you with information, advice and general tips. Your community legal service, council or shire office may also be able to tell you about local laws.

Providing a safe environment
If anything goes wrong at the party, or even after the party, and you have not taken care to prevent this, you could be held liable. (You may hear terms such as “legal liability”, “negligence” and “duty of care”.) Even if no laws have been broken, you could still be sued. As the parent and host you need to do all that you can to make the party safe. Some of the risks involved in hosting a party are listed here:
- Guests may drink too much alcohol or use illegal drugs. It may be unsafe for them to do ordinary activities such as crossing a road or swimming
- Guests may drive their vehicles after having consumed alcohol or illegal drugs
- There could be situations involving abusive behaviour or sexual harassment
- There could be violence, people could be injured or property damaged.
If trouble such as this occurs and the parent of a young guest can show that you did not take reasonable steps to avoid the risk of injury, they could hold you liable for the damage the guest may have suffered.

BYO
If you allow teenage guests to bring their own alcohol to your party, you may have less control over what they do with it. Even though you have not supplied it yourself, if you are aware that teenagers are consuming alcohol, you could be “liable” if a problem arises.

Balancing the responsibilities and expectations of a party can be a challenging exercise.
Deciding what type of party to host

After doing some background research you will have found out some more about what goes on in your teenager’s social group. You will have also obtained relevant legal and insurance information and be aware of your responsibilities as host.

This information will provide a base from which to work out an agreement about the type of party you and your teenager wish to host. As the adult, the decision ultimately is yours, but things will go more smoothly if everyone in the family agrees about the party and takes the same approach.

In deciding on an agreement about alcohol, other drugs and supervision at the party, think about where the party will be held, who might come and what the social group is like. Will they be under 18, over 18, or a mixture of ages (18th birthday parties often have a mix)?

Good preparation involves thinking ahead about what will make the party fun for the guests. Sit down with your teenager and work out who will be there and how to set the scene for a special event.

Negotiating with teenagers

If you are having difficulty reaching an agreement about what kind of party to hold, you may wish to negotiate with your teenager about certain conditions. For example, in exchange for their agreement to have an alcohol-free or low-alcohol party, you could agree to limit the amount of time you spend in the party area.

Another negotiating position could be to allow more guests if your teenager agrees to make up and send out formal written invitations.

The bottom line must be that you are comfortable with the arrangements. If you have negotiated an alcohol, other drugs and supervision agreement that you feel comfortable with, you will be able to start preparing for a fun time.

Laws about illegal drugs can limit your choices as a parent. You may want to take a ‘harm reduction’ approach to your children’s social development. For example, you may want to monitor your child’s drug-taking, rather than ban it outright. However, this could open you up to risks, particularly if other people’s children are involved.”

- Timothy Moore, Redfern Legal Centre

The best thing is to have an open and honest discussion with your teenager. Look at all the possibilities in relation to alcohol and drugs, and talk them over. Don’t always expect total honesty from adolescents, but it’s better to raise the subject. Try not to be too directive and controlling: try to have an equal conversation. If you have boundaries (“There are some things I will just not accept”) these need to be expressed clearly.”

- Tony Trimingham, Family Drug Support

Noise and disturbing the neighbours

All state and territories have laws that set out acceptable noise levels. Contact your local police to find out whether limits apply at certain times of the day or night, on weekdays and weekends. Local councils and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) may also be able to assist with information and advice about noise levels.

It would also be a good idea to notify your neighbours in advance about the party.

Liability insurance

Whether the party is held at your home or not, you should find out about insurance. Contact your insurer, the owner of the facility you are hiring, or the local council/shire and find out what the policy covers.

Questions you should ask:

- Who is covered under the policy?
- What types of risk does the policy cover for you?
- Does the policy cover all the activities to occur at the party?
- What is excluded under the policy?
- What is the period of coverage?
- What is the level of cover?
- What is the excess you will have to pay if you have to make a claim?
Managing alcohol & other drugs  
Hosting teenage parties

Should alcohol be allowed?

While not allowing alcohol at the party may result in conflict between you and your teenager, you may want to make the party alcohol and drug-free in order to reduce the likelihood of problems.

If the party is to be held at your house and you already have an agreement or policy about alcohol, smoking and other drugs in your home, this could help you come to a decision.

Possibilities for the party could include:

- an alcohol and drug-free party
- smoking only allowed outside, not indoors
- alcohol allowed, provided by you at the party
- BYO alcohol.

No alcohol — this is a valid choice and can be a success. There are lots of ways that hosts can give the occasion that bit of “spark”. For example, by having a theme party or being creative with the decorations and activities. You may need to persuade your teenager that alcohol is not needed to make the party a success.

Alcohol allowed — if you allow alcohol to be brought and/or consumed at the party, you should take special care to control how much your guests consume. See the section on catering (page 13).

You are responsible for providing information to parents of other teenagers attending your party, particularly if alcohol is involved. Other parents may object to their children attending if alcohol will be consumed. They may want to be reassured that the party will be properly supervised.

“If the party is to be held in a public hall or sporting facility, visit the location beforehand and inspect it inside and out. Identify the entrances and exit(s) to the facility. It is wise to avoid buildings with multiple entrances.”

- Safe Party Kit, Wollongong Police & Community Youth Club/City of Wollongong

How many guests to invite?

When thinking about the size of the party and before making your decision, take into account:

- the type of party you want (formal, theme, “just a party”)
- your budget (for example, for food, drinks, decorations, invitations)
- the amount of help available
- the size of the venue.

Where to hold the party?

Do you and your teenager feel this should be an intimate, more personal party, a big “one in, all in” event, or something in between? Do you want to take advantage of a setting that is beautiful or has special significance? Making choices such as these will influence your decision about where to hold the party.

If you are inviting a large number of guests, you could consider holding the party in a neutral venue such as a hall. You will need to check with the owner, local council or shire about insurance, liquor and noise regulations, and you will probably have to sign a contract to abide by these.

If you are hosting the party at your home clarify with your teenager which rooms may be used and which ones are out-of-bounds.

Whether you hold the party at home or somewhere else, try to confine it to a backyard, building or enclosed area, as it is easier to keep an eye on things. Avoid using front yards or street frontages, as these encourage gatecrashers.

If your teenager feels he or she cannot have an evening party without alcohol, then consider a daytime “themed” event.
Planning the party

Once you and your teenager have negotiated an agreement about the type of party you plan to host, how many guests are to be invited, where the party will be held and your policy on alcohol and other drugs, you can begin the next stage of planning. This includes deciding how you will inform guests of the party, catering, how much supervision will be required, and other safety and security issues.

Informing guests and parents about the party

Written invitations have many advantages. They are a first point of contact with other parents about the party and you can use them to encourage parents to contact you for further information.

Written invitations send a message that the party is for invited guests only. It is very easy to forward invitations or party details sent by email or SMS to large groups of people, so it is important to make it clear that the party is for invitees only. You may also consider personally addressing the invitation to the invitee so it is clear who is invited. This may also help to stop people forwarding the invitation to others.

Invitations also allow you to communicate what you expect from guests and what they can expect from you. This may include a dress code, whether alcohol will be provided and when the party will finish.

Including a request to RSVP by a certain date can help you work out how many guests to plan for.

Whether or not you send invitations, for younger age groups it is wise to phone the parents of those who will be coming. As you are doing this, you can collect their contact details to have available on the night.

Providing supervision and assistance

Teenagers often don’t want their parents to be present or involved in the party, for a range of reasons. However, as the host you are responsible for ensuring that your teenager’s party is properly supervised.

Having activities and plenty of food will give you the opportunity to move in and out of the party room/s and keep an eye on things, without spoiling the fun.

The amount of supervision the party will require will depend on how many guests are invited, where it is being held and what type of party it is.

Having some extra adults at the party can be a great help, especially if a large number of young people have been invited. If you have made contact with some of the other parents in your teenager’s social group, you may feel able to ask for some support. Helpers can be particularly useful for preventing gatecrashers and for serving drinks. You may even consider hiring a security firm.

Many police stations have developed party registration forms and safe party kits with information and advice. Register your party with the local police well in advance of the date. Police may be able to have a patrol car drive by to check for any trouble with gatecrashers.

Catering

It is important to make sure plenty of food is available. While eating doesn’t stop people getting drunk, having food in the stomach slows down the process. Eating also slows the pace at which we drink and fills us up, so we are less likely to drink.

Some ideas:

- Limit salty, greasy snacks if alcohol is being consumed, as these make people thirsty.
- Serve low-salt chips and crackers.
- Start the party with some savoury food, provide hot food halfway through the party and finish with cake, fruit and desserts.
- Ensure food is promoted and easily accessible to guests all the time.
- Organise for food to be regularly taken around to guests. This could be an opportunity for you or another adult to move around the party and check how things are going.
- Make sure there is a wide range and sufficient supply of non-alcoholic drinks such as water, soft drinks, juices, no-alcohol punch, tea and coffee.
- Non-alcoholic cocktails are another option — see the section on non-alcoholic cocktails (page 23) for some delicious recipes. Place the non-alcoholic drinks near the entrance, or get someone to serve them to guests as they enter the party. This is a good way to start things off!

Invitations can make the party seem formal. However, this can be overcome with a bit of imagination. Using humour or an original design can be effective as well as fun!
If you are serving alcohol at the party:
- For younger age groups, consider restricting the time during which alcohol will be served; for example, between 8pm and 9pm, with dinner or for toasts.
- Set up a bar area so guests have to come to the bar to get a drink.
- Consider asking someone who will not be drinking alcohol to take charge of serving drinks (a designated server). This should preferably be a responsible adult who will help control the amount of alcohol consumed and will free you to do other things, such as any planned activities. You will need to work out whether it will be up to the server, or you as host, to deal with anyone who has had too much to drink (see page 19, Dealing with problem behaviour).
- Promote the use of glasses (preferably small ones) for those drinking alcohol, and discourage guests from drinking from bottles, stubbies or cans.
- Pre-mix drinks to ensure the alcohol content is limited. Mix lighter drinks for those who are drinking spirits (older age groups).
- Check the labels on bottles and do not supply drinks with an extremely high alcohol content.
- Encourage people to use non-alcohol drinks as “spacers” (for example, every second drink is non-alcoholic). However, try to make sure that the non-alcoholic drinks are not carbonated (fizzy). Carbonated drinks speed up the rate at which you get drunk. Juices or water are safer.

Do not let anyone go around topping up alcoholic drinks. This makes it difficult for guests to keep track of how much they have drunk.
- Serve alcoholic drinks only on request.
- Ensure you are aware of the laws in your state or territory around supplying other people’s children with alcohol.
- There may be a risk that one of your guests could add alcohol or drugs to a punch or other drinks (“drink spiking”). The designated server and other adults should keep an eye on the punch and unsupervised drinks. Encourage groups of friends to look after each other. Spiking drinks is dangerous and illegal.

Activities
Consider providing facilities for activities that can keep people entertained and take the focus off drinking. For example:
- pool table
- table soccer
- jukebox, dance music, karaoke
- competitions
- sports activities
- movies
- computer games.

Consider hiring a DJ to encourage dancing which can take the focus off drinking.

Venue set up
The layout of a party can influence guests’ behaviour, assist with security and can support other strategies for reducing excessive drinking.

The layout will depend on where the party is held and what facilities are available, but some things to consider include:
- Where people will enter the party and where they are most likely to stand around in groups, dance etc.
- Have food available as guests enter the party.
- Place tables of food and snacks close to where people gather.
- Set up the alcohol serving area as far as possible from the entrance.

Keep the fridge or bar for alcoholic drinks away from crowded areas.
- Keep the bar or alcohol serving area small so that people will not congregate around it.
- Ensure there is plenty of room for people to circulate hot, noisy, crowded situations mixed with people who have been drinking can lead to arguments.
- If possible, provide a room or area as a space where guests can take “time out” in a more relaxed atmosphere.
- Have only one entrance to the party that will make it easier to control who attends and what they bring to the party. You may need to secure side or back gates.
- Make sure that vehicle access is not blocked.
Transport and accommodation arrangements

Encourage guests to come by taxi or have parents drop off and pick up their teenagers. In rural areas where long distances are involved, parents of invited children may need to contact each other about dropping off and picking up teenagers. Sleepovers for younger teenagers are another option if the party is being held in a private home.

You will need to check how people are getting home and who is driving. Young people, especially if they have been drinking, may not be able to tell if someone else is able to drive them home safely. While car pooling and/or having a designated driver may seem like a good idea, P-plate drivers are encouraged to minimise the carrying of peer passengers, particularly during the first 12-months of the P-plate licence. Driving with a car full of peer passengers increases the risk of a fatal crash by four times compared to solo driving.4

You could consider getting drivers to hand in their keys when they arrive. This gives you a chance to check on their condition at the end of the party. To encourage handing in of keys, consider drawing keys for a prize.

Remember your duty of care as host. You don’t want to be held responsible, or feel responsible, if there is an accident. If a guest has been drinking they shouldn’t be driving.

Remember that only time will remove alcohol from the body. Consuming food slows down the process of becoming drunk, but does not prevent it. A person who has been drinking heavily and sleeps over may still have alcohol in their system the next day, so they may still be unfit to drive.

It is a good idea to make some plans about what you will do at the end of the party if there are guests who haven’t left. Parents’ phone numbers may come in handy. For example, you may have to contact the parents of a teenager who is drunk and afraid to go home and face the music.

What to do if there’s an emergency

It’s best to be prepared in case of an emergency. With some simple planning you can prevent injury and even help save a life.

You should make sure that there is clear vehicle access to the venue at all times.

Have the following phone numbers near the telephone where you can easily find them:

- a list of parents’ phone numbers (particularly if the party is for younger children)
- the nearest medical centre or hospital that will be open
- the police, ambulance and fire brigade (dial 000)
- the local police station (in case of gatecrashers)
- the local taxi service
- a number for the alcohol and drug information service in your state or territory (see back cover).

It would be helpful if you have first-aid training or if any of the non-drinking adults have had first-aid training so you know what to do in an emergency.

Someone who is vomiting will often ask to be left alone. However, it is important that someone stays with the person in case they choke. Choking on vomit can cause death.

Don’t hesitate to call an ambulance if you think one is needed. Remember that ambulance officers are not required to call the police to drug overdoses or drug-related incidents.


If there is an emergency, stay with the person, call 000 and try to stay calm.

1. Check for danger — to you, to others, to the person.
2. Check for a response — shout and gently shake the person’s shoulders.
3. If the person is unconscious, check their airways — if the airways are blocked, gently place the person in the recovery position (as long as there are no head, neck or spine injuries), clear their mouth and tilt their head back to open the airway.
4. Check for breathing — if the person is not breathing, gently roll them onto their back and give two initial breaths. If breathing returns, gently roll the person into the recovery position and wait for help to arrive.
5. If breathing does not return, commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) at a ratio of 30 compressions to two effective breaths. Continue until medical help arrives.

Recovery position

An unconscious person should be gently moved into the recovery position so their tongue cannot fall back and prevent breathing.
Be prepared on the night
With planning and preparation, everything should go well. However, there is always a possibility that something unexpected will happen. You can only do your best. Being ready on the night will mean that there is less chance of harm from alcohol or other drug problems, gatecrashers or crowds.
You will be a role model. The atmosphere that you set up for the party will have an effect on the behaviour of the young people present (even though they might not admit this at the time).

Noise levels
- Experiment with sound equipment before the party. Go outside and listen to get an idea of how the noise carries. This could save problems later.
- Arrange for speaker systems or bands to be placed as far away from neighbours as possible.
- Secure any dogs or other pets and make them comfortable. Dogs will be less likely to bark or run away.

Running the party
As the host, you would be well advised not to drink alcohol or use drugs yourself. You will be in a better position to deal with any incidents that may occur.
You should also set aside some time to brief the other adult helpers about who will do what and how problems should be handled. For example:
- Organise for your teenager and a reliable adult, who together know most of the guests, to be on the door to ensure only invited guests are allowed in and to make sure people are not coming and going.
- Make sure they know your rules about alcohol and other drugs and how to deal with intoxicated or problem guests (see page 19, Dealing with problem behaviour). Remember, it is far easier to prevent your guests from getting intoxicated than it is to deal with someone who is intoxicated.
- Find out which non-drinking adults have first-aid training and ensure the helpers know where the emergency phone list is.
Consult your teenager from time to time to make sure everything is going okay. If things are getting out of hand, they may be able to help get them back on track.
Check your watch so that serving food and/or cake, speeches and other planned activities happen on time, and encourage guests to leave at the time you have chosen for the party to end.

Dealing with problem behaviour
If a guest’s behaviour is becoming a problem, or they are drinking too much, getting too loud or harassing people, you can:
- Talk to the person in private (so they won’t be embarrassed).
- Offer food.
- Offer alternatives to alcohol (water, soft drink, punch, juice).
- Encourage them to drink low-alcohol alternatives.
- Talk to their friends or to someone who may be able to influence them.
- Refuse to serve them any more alcohol.
When you approach the person:
- Avoid confrontation or put-downs.
- Keep calm.
- Avoid touching the person.
- Clarify the reasons for refusing to serve them any more alcohol.

Dealing with someone who is behaving badly or has had too much to drink is not usually all that pleasant; however, there can be good reasons for you as host to take action:
- You are concerned for the safety of the person and other guests.
- You do not want the behaviour to escalate and get out of control.
- You want to avoid drunken behaviour disrupting the party.
- The person may be over the legal limit to drive home.
It is important to ensure the safety of that person and prevent harm to others. So if all else fails:
- You could encourage them to move to a quiet or separate area of the house or premises, at least for a while
- If they have driven to the party themselves, ensure that they don’t drive home
- Remember that a person who is drunk may still be at risk using public transport or attempting to walk home, due to the reduction in their coordination and reaction time
- If a parent is unable to come and take them home, consider taking them home yourself, arranging for someone else to take them home, or offering them a bed or couch for the night (for under-18 year olds, contact their parents first).

Note that sending an intoxicated guest home in a taxi may mean that they do not arrive safely.

What about drugs?
Parties involving drugs such as ecstasy and amphetamines have become popular with some older teenagers. Cannabis is another drug that teenagers may wish to use at parties. The effects from consuming illicit drugs such as these can be unpredictable. Also, combining alcohol with any other drug (including over-the-counter or prescribed medicines) can be dangerous. The effects of one drug may be greatly altered by the other.

If you have decided that you do not want guests to use illegal drugs at the party, and you believe that drugs are being taken, you need to take action. This could include speaking to the person concerned in private, clarifying your “no drugs” policy and/or informing parents. If you are unable to contact their parents, you will need to feel confident that the young person is in a fit state and able to get home safely, before asking them to leave.

If you feel a responsibility to keep the guest at the party and under your care, you will need to find out what drugs they have taken and in what quantity. You could call the phone number for the alcohol and drug information service your state or territory (see back cover) for support in dealing with the situation.

Have some spare bedding available in case someone cannot go home for some reason.

Signs of intoxication

If you know someone, it is easier to work out whether or not they are drunk. It is more difficult to spot the signs of intoxication in a person you do not know. Remember that people respond differently to alcohol, and also that behaviour can be misinterpreted.

Common signs of intoxication include:
+ glassy eyes
+ loud conversation, talking too much
+ slurred speech
+ swearing more than usual
+ showing more emotion than usual
+ being over-friendly
+ poor coordination, fumbling and swaying
+ being argumentative, aggressive or brooding.
Getting started

To help make decisions, do a bit of research to find out:

- What goes on at your teenager’s friends’ parties
- Local laws on alcohol and drugs, especially for under-18s
- Noise regulations in your area
- The type and extent of insurance coverage available (at home or other venue).

Negotiate with your teenager and decide what type of party to host, including:

- The date and time of the party
- The party budget
- How many guests will be invited
- Where the party will be held
- An agreement on the alcohol and other drugs policy and the supervision arrangements.

Well before date of party

- Design, make and send out invitations
- Contact guests’ parents, gather phone/contact details (for younger teenagers)
- Organise helpers and security (if needed)
- Contact the local police to register your party

Just before the party

- Inform neighbours of the party
- Organise activities, including booking equipment, performers etc.
- Make a list of emergency phone numbers and decide how an emergency will be handled.

On the day of the party

- Plan, buy and prepare food, drinks and decorations
- Organise hire/purchase of crockery, cutlery, glasses etc.
- Have spare bedding ready.

Experiment with sound equipment so you know how to set it up to minimise disturbance to neighbours.

Set up and decorate the venue

Lock any side fences or gates (if necessary)

Make sure there is vehicle access

Secure any pets

Ensure any helpers and security staff are aware of your alcohol and other drug policy and how to deal with problem guests and emergencies.

Let the party begin!

Non-alcoholic cocktail recipes

Andy Williams
60 ml Claytons Tonic
15 ml lime juice
Dash sugar syrup
Top-up with soda water.
Shake with ice and pour.
Garnish with a thin slice of lime.

Angel’s Kiss
1 scoop vanilla ice cream
1 tablespoon passionfruit pulp
150 ml apricot nectar
Blend with ice and pour.
Garnish with mint leaves.

Cane Toad
30 ml passionfruit pulp
30 ml sugar syrup
30 ml lemon juice
Top-up with dry ginger ale.
Shake with ice and pour.
Garnish with two lemon slices and mint leaves.

Cocomint
1 scoop chocolate ice cream
30 ml coconut cream
60 ml milk
30 ml lime cordial
Blend with ice and pour.
Garnish with a teaspoon of crushed peppermint crisp bar and mint leaves.

Coffee Crunch
90 ml coconut cream
90 ml cream
1 egg
120 ml Cottees Iced Coffee
Blend with ice and pour.
Garnish with a sprinkle of cinnamon sugar and serve with a straw.

Happy Days
½ peach or apricot, stoned
150 ml pineapple juice
15 ml lime juice
Blend with ice and pour.
To garnish, pour a teaspoon of Grenadine over the top of the drink, add apricot slice and a straw.

Maria’s Magic
6 strawberry pieces
1 banana
150 ml pineapple juice
1 scoop crushed ice
Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth.
Garnish with a whole strawberry, slice of banana and a pineapple leaf.

Mocktini
15 ml lime juice
dash lemon juice
60 ml tonic water
Stir with ice and strain.
Garnish with a green olive on a toothpick, or a lemon twist.
Red Magic
90 ml apple juice
4 raspberries
1 teaspoon honey
Blend with ice and strain. Garnish with raspberries on side of glass with a little mint.

Sure Thing
150 ml lemonade
2 scoops of vanilla ice cream
50 ml pineapple juice
½ banana
strawberry pieces
1 scoop crushed ice
Mix all ingredients together in a blender until smooth. Garnish with a whole strawberry and a cocktail umbrella.

Tenderberry
6 strawberry pieces
100 ml thick cream
30 ml Grenadine
100 ml dry ginger ale
1 scoop crushed ice
Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Garnish with a whole strawberry on side of glass.

Spice Mary
150 ml tomato juice
15 ml lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce
2 or 3 drops Tabasco Sauce
Salt and pepper to taste
Build over ice and stir. Garnish with a celery stalk, lemon slice and a straw.

Alcohol and drug information services and parent lines in your state or territory

For information, counselling, advice and other assistance, contact:

**Australia-wide**
Family Drug Support: 1300 368 186 (toll-free)
CounsellingOnline: www.counsellingonline.org.au

**South Australia**
Alcohol and drugs: 1300 131 340 (toll-free)
Parent advice: 1300 364 100 (toll-free)

**Australian Capital Territory**
Alcohol and drugs: (02) 6207 9977
Parent advice: (02) 6287 3833

**Tasmania**
Alcohol and drugs: 1800 811 994 (toll-free)
Parent advice: 1300 808 178 (toll-free)

**New South Wales**
Alcohol and drugs: (02) 9361 8000
1800 422 599 (toll-free outside Sydney)
Parent advice: 13 20 55 (toll-free)

**Victoria**
Alcohol and drugs: 1300 85 85 84 (information, toll-free)
1800 888 236 (counselling, toll-free)
Family Drug Help: 1300 660 068 (toll-free)
Parent advice: 13 22 89

**Northern Territory**
Alcohol and drugs: 1800 131 350 (toll-free)
Parent advice: 1300 301 300

**Western Australia**
Alcohol and drugs: (08) 9442 5000
1800 198 024 (toll-free outside Perth)
Parent advice: 1800 654 432 (toll-free)

**Queensland**
Alcohol and drugs: 1800 177 833 (toll-free)
Parent advice: 1300 301 300