



AFP
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

ACT POLICING POCKETBOOK GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND TEENAGERS

Alcohol and Drugs



PART 1 - A PARENT'S TOOLKIT

PART 2 - ALCOHOL

PART 3 - DRUGS

PART 4 - ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

TALKING WITH YOUR TEENAGER ABOUT
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Many parents are concerned that at some stage their children will face the issue of illicit drug use, teenage drinking, or both.

Whether their teenager is planning a party, has arrived home sick and/or drunk, wants to experiment with drugs for the first time or if drugs have been found among the teenager's belongings, a parent's most valuable asset is good, open communication within their family.

www.afp.gov.au



MAKE SURE YOU ARE WELL INFORMED

If your child asks you a question and you aren't sure of the answer, don't just guess. Be honest, admit you don't know, and look for the answer together using information from books, the internet or health professionals. It is also important to:

- Be involved in their lives.
- Get to know their friends so that you always know who they are with and where they are going. Make an effort to get to know their friends' parents. This keeps communication open and can be a great support when you face difficult situations.
- Make sure they understand that no matter what happens they can call you at any time if they are in trouble or unsafe.
- Provide ideas on how they can deal with peer pressure.
- Let them know you do not support them drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Set firm limits, and if two parents are involved, make sure you support each other and your approach is consistent.

A good way to be informed is to look at current information available from the Australian Drug Foundation website at:

www.druginfo.adf.org.au

GETTING THEM TO TALK

- Pick the right time.
- Avoid instances where either of you are hungry, tired, upset, under the influence of alcohol, or if friends are present.
- Spend time together to build your relationship and allow plenty of time for incidental chats. For example, walking the dog together, travelling in the car, or playing sport together are situations where they are more likely to remain present and attentive.
- Use prompts from television, advertising or newspapers to start a discussion.
- Take advantage of times when they want you to do something for them, as they may be more likely to be cooperative.
- Don't make every quiet time you are together a time for deep discussion or they may begin to avoid those situations.



SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

- Drink sensibly.
- Show them how to refuse a drink.
- Be aware of the words and descriptions you are using when you talk about alcohol. For example when you say "it has been a tough week, I need a drink", you are giving a clear message about the role of alcohol.

WHEN YOU FINALLY GET TO DISCUSSION

- Make sure you listen and don't do all the talking.
- Remember to give positive feedback when they have made good decisions.
- Resist bringing up past mistakes.
- Consider the pressure on today's teenagers.

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT

- Be honest about the enjoyable, and the less enjoyable sides of drinking alcohol. Or in the matter of drugs, the effects, the immediate risks and health issues involved.
- Discuss the negative effects of drugs and alcohol including the risks and health issues such as aggression, reduced inhibitions, poor judgement and regretting actions the next day.
- Make sure they understand that no matter what happens they can call you at any time if they are in trouble or unsafe.



WHAT IS ALCOHOL?

Alcohol refers to drinks such as beer, wine, or spirits which contain ethyl alcohol - a substance that affects the way in which the central nervous system functions. Alcohol affects mental processing and can cause drunkenness – loss of physical control of the body - or changes in consciousness, mood, and emotions.

WHAT IS BINGE DRINKING?

Binge drinking is drinking too much alcohol at one time. 'Too much' alcohol is any amount that puts you at risk of making bad decisions or doing things that you later regret. Alcohol affects mental processing, which can influence your mood, judgement and muscle control. This is a cause for concern as changes in mood, errors of judgement and loss of control lead to an increased risk of accidents, injuries and harm, and may lead to becoming a victim of crime.

ALCOHOL POISONING

Alcohol is a poison that you can overdose and die from. Signs of alcohol overdose include nausea, vomiting, falling into a coma, shallow breathing, pale skin and loss of bladder control. Alcohol poisoning can lead to death.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF BINGE DRINKING

- Living with the consequences of what you did.
- Consumption of alcohol reduces people's inhibitions and often causes them to do something they later regret and feel embarrassed or ashamed of. Intoxicated people may lose their drivers licence from drink driving, or do something silly while intoxicated which may constitute a criminal offence.
- An intoxicated person also increases their vulnerability and risk of being the victim of a criminal offence such as assault, sexual assault, robbery, theft or drink spiking.
- Hurting yourself or somebody else.
- Aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Misreading the social situation and going too far in your behaviour.
- Having unsafe sex, leading to possible sexually transmitted infection (STI) or unwanted pregnancy.
- Doing things that are physically dangerous while not in control of your body.
- Causing injury to yourself or someone else, leading to possible permanent damage or death.

Frequent binge drinking may cause physiological changes such as:

- Reduced memory, language and learning skills.
- Mental health problems such as anxiety or depression.
- Problems in relationships with friends and family members.
- Shrunken testicles and sexual dysfunction.
- Bad skin, hair and nails, and other signs of toxicity.

FAST FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

- The human brain continues to develop until around 25 years of age. Between 16 and 25 years of age your brain 're-wires' itself, connecting up different regions in new ways and establishing the neural pathways necessary for complex thinking activities such as problem-solving, coordination of several tasks and forward planning.
- For people under 25 years of age, repeated episodes of binge drinking can result in impaired brain development, with permanent effects on the size, structure and function of your brain.
- Alcohol is a drug which many Australians misuse. Among people aged 15 to 34 years, alcohol causes more deaths and hospitalisations than all illicit use of drugs, and many more than tobacco.
- Each week, one Australian teenager dies from alcohol-related causes, often a result of car accidents, misadventure, other accidents and assaults.
- Seventy Australians under 25 will be hospitalised due to alcohol-caused assault in an average week.
- On average, one in four hospitalisations of people aged between 15 and 24 happen because of alcohol.

ALCOHOL, YOUNG PERSONS AND THE LAW

In the ACT, if you are under the age of 18, it is illegal to:

- Possess or consume alcohol in a public place.
- Buy, possess or drink alcohol on licensed premises.
- Get someone who is at least 18 years of age to buy or supply you with alcohol in a licensed premises or public place. Both you and the person supplying the alcohol have committed an offence.
- If you are intoxicated in a public place, you may be lodged in protective police custody to ensure your safety and welfare.
- Excessive drinking can lead to alcohol-related violence and assault, and could lead to a criminal record or fines for those persons found guilty of an offence. Convictions for offences may limit driving, employment and overseas travel opportunities.
- In the ACT, if you are a learner or provisional driver, you are restricted to a blood-alcohol concentration limit of **0.00** milligrams of alcohol per litre of blood. You may not realise it at the time, but alcohol seriously affects your general driving judgement and reaction times. In the ACT, up to half of road related deaths involve a driver under the influence of alcohol.

FAST FACTS ABOUT ECSTASY (MDMA)

Ecstasy is a street term for a range of drugs that are similar in structure to MDMA (Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) which has similar effects to that of amphetamines and hallucinogens.

Important

Ecstasy is illegal, and its ingredients are often hard to get. Therefore, manufacturers may substitute a wide range of substances when making the drug.

Most ecstasy tablets in Australia do not actually contain MDMA and are comprised of other dangerous harmful chemicals, as well as amphetamine and methamphetamine. Like other illegally manufactured drugs, there are no controls on factors such as the strength and hygiene of the drug. This increases the chance of a person overdosing, being poisoned or experiencing other adverse reactions after taking the drug.



**Ecstasy
(MDMA)**



EFFECTS

Effects of taking ecstasy may include:

- increased heart rate, body temperature and blood pressure;
- jaw clenching and teeth grinding;
- nausea;
- vomiting;
- irrational or bizarre behaviour;
- hallucinations.
- insomnia;
- depression;
- anxiety;
- paranoia;
- fatigue; and
- depression from the come down.

After using ecstasy some or all of the following symptoms can occur and last up to several days.

ECSTASY, YOUNG PERSONS AND THE LAW

The severity of penalties for ecstasy-type offences is ultimately the discretion of the court. The guide for these penalties however starts at a \$5,000 fine and/or two years imprisonment, and can increase up to a \$1,000,000 fine and/or 25 years imprisonment.

FAST FACTS ABOUT COCAINE

Cocaine belongs to a group of drugs known as stimulants. Stimulants speed up the messages going between the brain and the body.

Cocaine does not have a very long duration of effect. This means that a user is usually ready for another dose in about 40 minutes or less. The rapid rush in blood levels, followed by a rapid fall, often leaves the user wanting to experience the original high.



Seized cocaine



EFFECTS

Effects from cocaine use may include:

- euphoria (sense of happiness and well being);
- increased blood pressure, heart rate and temperature;
- insomnia and exhaustion;
- depression;
- anxiety, paranoia and psychosis;
- eating disorders and weight loss;
- sexual dysfunction; and
- hypertension and an irregular heart rate.



Important

One frightening feature of cocaine is that the drug can cause seizures at doses not much greater than those that cause effects on mood.

COCAINE, YOUNG PERSONS AND THE LAW

The severity of penalties for cocaine offences is ultimately the discretion of the court. The guide for these penalties however starts at a \$5,000 fine and/or two years imprisonment, and can grow up to a \$1000,000 fine and/or 25 years imprisonment.

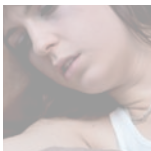
FAST FACTS ABOUT HEROIN

Heroin is one of a group of drugs known as opiates. Opiates slow down the activity of the central nervous system and messages going to and from the brain and body.

Providing intense euphoria and pain relief, heroin is highly addictive. Users are very likely to become addicted even after a few days and encounter difficulty giving up the addiction.

If an addicted person suddenly stops taking heroin, or severely cuts down on the amount they use, they will experience physical withdrawal symptoms because their body has to readjust to functioning without the drug.

People who fall victim to heroin addiction are often unable to continue living a functional life.



EFFECTS

Effects from heroin use may include:

- constipation;
- menstrual irregularity and infertility in women;
- loss of sex drive among men;
- nausea and vomiting;
- poor concentration;
- infection;
- disease; and
- decalcification and decay of teeth.



Like other illegally manufactured drugs, there are no controls on factors such as the purity and hygiene of the drug. This increases the chance of a person overdosing, being poisoned or experiencing other adverse reactions after taking the drug.

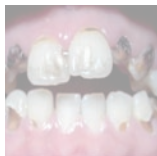
HEROIN, YOUNG PERSONS AND THE LAW

The severity of penalties for heroin offences is ultimately the discretion of the court. The guide for these penalties however starts at a \$5,000 fine and/or two years imprisonment, and can grow up to a \$1,000,000 fine and/or 25 years imprisonment.

FAST FACTS ABOUT ICE (CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE)

"Ice", or "crystal meth", is a highly purified crystal form of methamphetamine. Methamphetamine gives the user a high by simulating the brain's chemicals that are responsible for making us feel excited, alert and euphoric. The drug is highly addictive with users often becoming addicted within days.

People who fall victim to ice addiction often suffer from psychosis and physical breakdown.



"Meth mouth"

EFFECTS

Some effects of using Crystalline Methamphetamine are:

- palpitations and chest pains;
- feeling agitated;
- feeling anxious or irritable;
- sleep disturbance;
- depression and anxiety;
- withdrawal symptoms;
- psychosis; and
- decalcification and decay of teeth "meth mouth".

Coming down

Once the effects of ice comes to an end users begin to feel irritable, emotional, lethargic and paranoid. Many users are unable to sleep because of feeling agitated.

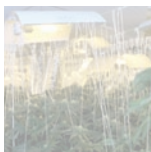
ICE, YOUNG PERSONS AND THE LAW

The severity of penalties for amphetamine offences is ultimately the discretion of the court. The guide for these penalties however starts at a \$5,000 fine and/or two years imprisonment, and can grow up to a \$1,000,000 fine and/or 25 years imprisonment.

FAST FACTS ABOUT CANNABIS

Cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug in Australia. Its effects can be influenced by many things, including how much of the drug is taken, the environment it is used in, as well as the weight, size, chemical composition and mood of the person using it.

There are a range of risks associated with the use of cannabis. It is the drug's effects on mental health however that attracts the most attention and public concern, particularly in relation to young people.



Hydroponics set-up

EFFECTS

Some effects of cannabis use may include:

- loss of co-ordination, reflexes and motor skills;
- dryness of the eyes, mouth and throat;
- anxiety and depression;
- paranoia and psychosis;
- hunger;
- increased risk of respiratory diseases associated with smoking, including cancer;
- dependence;
- decreased memory and learning abilities; and
- decreased motivation in areas such as study, work or concentration.

CANNABIS LAWS IN THE ACT

The use, possession, cultivation or supply of cannabis is illegal in the Australian Capital Territory and serious penalties may apply. Cannabis or marijuana includes any flowering or fruiting top, seed, stalk or any other part of a cannabis plant. ACT Policing is empowered to prosecute any person caught cultivating or possessing any amount of cannabis. ACT Policing also has the opportunity to deal with minor cannabis offences without the matter proceeding to court.

A minor cannabis offence constitutes:

- growing, or participating in growing up to two cannabis plants (excluding artificially cultivated plant); or
- possession of 25 grams of cannabis or less.

Should ACT Policing see it to be in the public interest, they may:

- refer minor cannabis offenders to the ACT Policing Drug Diversion program (This program allows offenders to access treatment and education for their drug use); or
- issue the offender a Simple Cannabis Offence Notice. This infringement requires the offender to pay a \$100 penalty within 60 days.

In the event that offenders fail to comply with the conditions of the Drug Diversion Program, or pay their Simple Cannabis Offence Notice within 60 days, the matter will be put before the court.

Important

Police do not have to issue a Simple Cannabis Offence Notice or refer minor drug offenders to the Drug Diversion program. ACT Policing is empowered to use discretion when deciding on such matters.

Penalties for cannabis offences start at \$100 for simple cannabis offences and range up to \$20,000 and 20 year jail terms for more serious cannabis offences.

FURTHER INFORMATION / HELP REFERENCES:

ACT Health Alcohol and Drug Service help line phone: (02) 6207 9977.

Other help lines:

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800
www.kidshelp.com.au

Lifeline: 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au

DirectLine: 1800 888 236
www.counsellingonline.org.au

Cannabis info helpline: 1800 30 40 50
www.ncpic.org.au

Websites:

Australian Drug Foundation:
www.druginfo.adf.org.au

Binge Drinking: it's all about you:
www.whatareyoudoingtoyourself.com

Reachout - for young people experiencing tough times:
www.reachout.com.au

Headspace – mental health support for young people:
www.headspace.org.au

Somazone – health advice for young people:
www.somazone.com.au

