



The risks to your child

Some parents may feel that giving their child a small amount of alcohol in their early teens will give them a responsible attitude to alcohol, but there is no scientific evidence to support this.

In fact, research shows that the earlier a child starts drinking the higher his or her risk of serious alcohol-related problems later in life.

There are many other risks associated with alcohol you should also be aware of:

- During late adolescence the brain is still continuing to grow, there are parts that will not be fully developed until their early 20s. The part of the brain that is involved in planning and judgment matures late, as well as the part relating to long-term memory and learning. By drinking, young people could prevent these parts of the brain developing properly.
- Young people are generally smaller and weigh less than adults, so alcohol is more concentrated in their bodies and they feel the effects of alcohol more quickly and for longer. Young people may also be less able to judge or control their drinking.
- Alcohol is linked with depression.