



## Did you know?

- Alcohol is a drug and it is addictive.
- Alcohol is one of the world's most harmful drugs. It causes more harm to Irish people, families and communities than nearly all other drugs.
- Young people are 4 times more likely to become dependent (addicted) to alcohol if they start drinking before the age of 15 than those who wait until after the age of 21.

## But everybody is drinking!

It might seem like everyone is drinking alcohol but many people choose not to. One-fifth of Irish people choose not to drink alcohol. Join the trend - say no!

## The law

### If you are under 18, it is illegal to:

- Carry alcohol
- Pretend to be 18 to buy alcohol
- Drink alcohol in public
- Be in an off-licence without an adult

If you break these you could face a €500 fine

## Support & Information

### Alcoholforum.org

T: +00353 (0)749125596  
E: info@alcoholforum.org  
www.alcoholforum.org

### Askaboutalcohol.ie

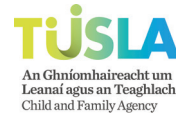
www.askaboutalcohol.ie

### HSE Drug and Alcohol Helpline

T: 1800 459 459

### www.drugs.ie

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# Alcohol: It's a No Brainer



## All you need to know about Alcohol and the Teenage Brain

This booklet was developed by young people for other young people about alcohol and how it can affect you.





## Did you know that the Teenage years are one of the most important times for brain development?

From the age of 11 or 12 lasting right up until your early twenties, the brain is starting to undergo some pretty cool changes.

The brain is starting to develop, re-wire, and fine-tune a part of the brain known as the pre-frontal cortex. Never mind your iPhones & Xboxes – the pre-frontal cortex is the most sophisticated piece of technology that you will ever own. It allows you to reach your full potential and to develop all the physical and mental skills you need to be the very best version of you.



## Alcohol may disrupt brain development

- Alcohol is a neurotoxin – It can have a toxic effect on brain cells and can stop them from growing or developing.
- Alcohol can impact your problem solving skills, learning and performance at school
- When it comes to alcohol – it really is a no brainer – for people under the age of 18 and for unlocking all your future potential – no alcohol really is the best choice.



For more information and support visit [alcoholforum.org](http://alcoholforum.org) or [askaboutalcohol.ie](http://askaboutalcohol.ie)

## What are Blackouts?

**Blackouts are a period of time where you can't remember events that happened. Alcohol can cause blackouts because it can shut down the memory centres of the brain. Young people are more likely to have alcohol-related blackouts than adults because their brain is still developing**

Blackouts can be scary and confusing. They can lead you to do or say things that you would never ordinarily do or say.

**Under the influence of alcohol you have increased risk of:**

- Being harmed by another person, or harming someone else
- Having an accident or being injured
- Unwanted or unintended sexual activity

Waiting until your brain is fully developed before starting to use alcohol is a safer choice.



## Alcohol can make feelings of anxiety or sadness worse

**When you drink alcohol you have less control over your emotions, behaviour and decisions and it can make feelings of sadness or anxiety worse.**

- Depression and anxiety rates are a lot higher in young people who drink harmful amounts of alcohol.
- There is a strong link between suicidal behaviour and the misuse of alcohol.

**You can invest in your mental health by avoiding alcohol.**



For support and more information on mental health visit [spunout.ie](http://spunout.ie) or [yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie)