



# Teenagers and alcohol

## Defence Community Organisation

### The teenage brain is in a state of intense development.

Through to the early twenties, the human brain goes through a complex process of moulding and hardwiring in readiness for the challenges of adulthood. Alcohol disrupts brain development during this critical phase of growth.

During this time, the brain is growing and forming all the critical parts it needs for learning, memory, planning, emotional stability and thinking.

Teens exposed to alcohol during this pivotal time of development face the increased potential for effecting normal development, as can kill nerve cell connections. They increase both short-term and long-term harms to their health, and risk their brains not reaching full capacity, which means they might never reach their full potential as an adult.

#### Resources and information for parents

- The Parenting Strategies website, at [www.parentingstrategies.net](http://www.parentingstrategies.net), was created by a team of researchers at the University of Melbourne and the Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre.

The website can help parents to manage the challenging issues that may occur during adolescence, including alcohol and drug misuse, provides parenting strategies to preventing alcohol misuse, and an online parenting program.

- The Drinkwise website, at [www.drinkwise.org.au](http://www.drinkwise.org.au), provides a range of information, resources and advice to help parents and teenagers discuss alcohol. There's even a section about 'schoolies week' and a one specifically for teenagers.

- Professor Ian Hickie, from Sydney University's medical school, [provides insights and research findings](#) on alcohol and the teenage brain, which may be interesting to those who want to read the science behind the issue.
- The Department of Health developed the Drinking Nightmare website at [www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au](http://www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au), which provides information, research and advice about alcohol and teenagers.
- The Beyond Blue website, [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au), directs families to local doctors and mental health practitioners.
- Defence families can contact the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 to talk with a social worker or psychologist.

**For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit [www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco) or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.**

The all-hours Defence Family Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

