

PARTY - HAVE FUN NO REGRETS

A Party Guide for Parents of Teenagers

(from a brochure funded by NSW Health)

Parties - A Great Opportunity

For young people to get together for a good time, to build friendships and get to meet new people. Many parents freak out at the idea of having a party in their own home when they hear some of the horror stories of gate-crashing, drunkenness and property damage. There are some simple steps parents can take that can be discussed with young people to help ensure the party goes off well and prevents the horror stories happening at your place.

Plan Ahead!

Talk to your teenager about the practical issues about holding a party. If you go ahead, involve your child in all levels of the organisation. Discuss with them your fears and concerns and don't get put off by: "It won't happen with my friends!"

Stress shared responsibility for hosting the party and jointly plan the party's organisation.

Parents report the biggest issues of conflict are around whether to be at home or not and availability of alcohol. It is important to negotiate but be clear about your expectations and stand by your own judgement of what is safe.

Issues of "What is Safe", includes the possibility of

- Damage to property.
- Gatecrashers.
- Intoxication leading to fighting, sexual assault etc.
- Drink driving and pedestrian injuries.

Before you send out invitations, set ground rules.

Some suggestions include:

- Set a maximum number of people. Stick to the invitation list.
- Alcohol Free party (essential for under 18 years).
- If serving alcohol to over 18s - set number of drinks per person. No BYO.
- Some rooms to be off limits to guests.
- Set a time for the party to end.
- Parents not restricted to one area of the house.
- Designate a single "official" entry and exit point into the venue or house.
- Work out strategies together if things look like they are going wrong.

Organise party activities

that take the emphasis away from drinking, such as:

- Music nights.
- Theme nights.
- Pool Party.
- Video nights.
- Pancakes and popcorn parties.

Invitations

- Agree on a manageable sized party (eg max 30 at a home based party).
- Set start and ending times for the party.
- Make a guest list and issue invitations.
- Agree that no other people can enter apart from those on the invitation list.

Don't forget to set ground rules before you send out your invitations!

Venue

- Designate a single "official" entry and exit point into the venue. Ensure there are other safety exits.
- Make guest aware that they cannot leave and return later. This avoids people returning drunk, under the influence of other drugs, or bringing uninvited guests in.
- Plan on being home during the entire party. Be there, but be discreet.
- Invite some other adults over as support, so you can have a good time too!

Police

- When planning a large party notify your local police in advance. This will help the police protect you, your guests and your neighbours.

Neighbours

- Notify your neighbours of the party. You will find most of them are willing to endure a minor inconvenience.
- Consider noise levels. Music will need to be toned down at 10pm

Valuables

- Make sure that someone is supervising the party.
- Ensure your own valuables are in a safe place.
- Have a room where all guests can leave their bags. This will also discourage people bringing alcohol without your knowledge.

Parking

- Determine whether there is ample parking and drop-off space before you send out your invitations.
- Talk to your neighbours about the party and arrange parking space with them if possible.
- Parking in close proximity also helps to avoid “car parties” starting.

At the party

- Greet visitors at the door. If someone has come uninvited, politely ask them to leave. If they decline, tell them you will call the police.
- Be aware of signs of alcohol or other drug use. Guests who try to bring in these substances, including alcohol, should be asked to leave.
- Alternatively, tell guests you will look after the alcohol and their parents can collect it after the party.
- Notify the parents of teens who arrive at the party drunk or under the influence of any other drug to ensure the teenager’s safe transportation home. Do not let anyone drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs!
- Replenish food trays and the drinks (non alcoholic). Your presence will help keep the party running smoothly and give you a chance to meet your teenager’s friends - but keep a low profile.
- Be a good role model for your children and your guests in regards to alcohol and other drugs. It is hard to expect teenager to behave responsibly if the adults don’t

Spot a gatecrasher!

- Tend to arrive late.
- Often try to avoid entering through the front door.
- Are frequently already intoxicated.
- Often vague about details about the party.
- Might not even know whose party it is!
- Ask them politely to leave. If they don’t tell them you will call the police.

Parties at other places

Even though your teenager might not want you to, check with the parents hosting the party about:

- If there is to be adult supervision.
- Whether there will be alcohol or other drugs there.

Discuss with your teenager what time they are coming home:

- Take your teenager to and from the party or insist on a designated driver.
- Go to the door to pick your teenager up.
- It is okay for them to want to come home early.
- Mobile phones are a great way to stay in contact.

There is no way you can anticipate all the things that could happen at a party, but don’t get put off. Stand by what you think is fair. It is better to have a difference of opinion with your teenager before a party than with 20 intoxicated gatecrashers during it!

Talk to your teenager about what they might do if they find alcohol and other drugs at the party.

Parties are a great opportunity for your kids to have a good time with their friends, and to appreciate some of the responsibilities that go with it.

Secondary Supply

It is against the law to sell or give alcohol to a person under 18 years of age. Penalties incurred can be up to \$5,500 (*Liquor Act 1982 Section II*)

Alcohol

- Make your family familiar with the laws and responsibilities about supplying alcohol.
- Feel confident to stick to these rules and make sure the teenagers do too. Remember that many problems at parties and after parties are alcohol related.
- If it is a party for under 18s, it should be an alcohol free event!
- Consider the implications of mixing under 18s with over 18 year olds.

If you decide to serve alcohol to over 18s, consider these ideas.

- Set a maximum number of standard drinks per person.
- Have adults serving.
- There should be no BYO. Inform guests when you invite them.
- Serve drinks from a central point in standard sized glasses. Remember, don’t serve alcohol to people who are intoxicated!
- Serve plenty of alcohol-free drinks and provide things to eat (not too salty!)
- If there are under 18s at the party, you should not serve them alcohol - nor should anyone else!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Your local GP.

Your local Police Station.

The Alcohol and Drug Information Service 1800 422 599

Family Planning Australia www.fpahealth.org.au

NSW Health www.health.nsw.gov.au