

# A Young Person's Guide To A Safe Night Out

## MIND SPACE

young people's  
health matters **MAYO**

Free and confidential support service  
for young people aged 15 – 25 years old.



## ALCOHOL USE IN IRELAND

Every year in Ireland, 60,000 children and young people in Ireland start drinking. This can pose a serious risk to their health and well-being as alcohol is an age-restricted, toxic substance associated with a range of health conditions, diseases and injuries.

Recent research from the Growing up in Ireland study found that young people aged 20 in 2018/2019 had almost all tried alcohol and 93% drank. Almost one-quarter drank alcohol at least twice per week, 22% had tried to reduce the amount of alcohol they drink, 3% had tried to give up.



## WHY DO PEOPLE DRINK?

Teenagers and young people may drink for many different reasons. They may be curious or bored. Teenagers may use alcohol because they want to move away from being a 'child' and see drinking as a sign of maturity.

Their friends may be drinking so they may want to be accepted and feel like they belong.

Alcohol may be used to help deal with feelings of insecurity, loss, loneliness and depression.

## DANGERS OF ALCOHOL USE

There are a lot of dangers associated with alcohol use. Anyone who drinks a lot in a short space of time can suffer alcohol poisoning. Drinking alcohol can reduce a young persons mental and physical abilities at the time, affecting judgment and co-ordination - which can lead to mishaps and sometimes accidents and injuries.

Height and weight can influence how alcohol affects a person, acute intoxication can occur rapidly in children and young people. Research shows that underage drinkers are more likely to suffer from a range of health issues including weight loss, disturbed sleep and headaches.

Remember, it is illegal for under 18's to buy alcohol or to pretend to be 18 to buy it. A criminal record can exclude you from some jobs. For some offenses, it can prevent you from traveling abroad.

## INGREDIENTS FOR A BAD HANGOVER!

- Going out without eating

- Too much too fast

- Peer pressure / rounds

- Mixing drinks

- Lack of hydration

- Disturbed sleep patterns

## ALCOHOL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Alcohol use can effect your mental health in a variety of ways. In the short term, alcohol use can effect your sleep and energy causing you to feel tired all the time. It can have an impact on your self esteem and your mood. people can experience a lot of different moods when drinking alcohol. Some report feeling happier and relaxed, some report feeling sadder and withdrawn and it can make some people more aggressive.

Alcohol use can increase the likelihood of a person experiencing symptoms of anxiety such as worry and panic, and also heavy alcohol use has been linked to depression.



# TIPS FOR REDUCING HARM AROUND ALCOHOL USE

Be careful how much you drink prior to going out (pre-drinking). Do not feel pressured to finish drinks or drink more quickly than you are comfortable with. It is also very important to watch what you're drinking at home. Some tips to limit your alcohol use include:

## 1. Be careful with 'pre-drinks'

Ireland has the highest rate of pre-drinking in a 2017 survey. When purchasing your drink for pre-drinking keep your limit in mind. Try to avoid shots.

## 2. Buy smaller drinks

Buy a single instead of a double.



TIPS!

## 3. Wait a while before getting another drink.

Have a glass of water or try some alcohol free beers, lagers or cocktails in between alcoholic drinks.

## 4. Remember it's always useful to have your hands free!

For dancing and not having a drink in front of your face so you can talk to your friends. People are more friendly than a drink and it might boost your mood more to have a chat rather than a drink .

## 5. Try not to get into rounds

Or if you can't avoid a round buy yourself a non-alcoholic drink when it is your turn.

## 6. Don't play drinking games

It is okay not to get involved in drinking games.

## 7. Know your limits

If you are honest, you know the point where you start to lose control, or behave differently because of alcohol.

Your main target should be not to have more than this.

If you drink fast you get drunk and lose control more quickly.

Drinking quickly puts a strain on your liver and body and it can be a warning sign of a drink problem developing.

Try making every second drink a non-alcoholic one.

## 8. Don't drink on the bus when going out

# YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE AN EXCUSE!

## PEER PRESSURE

Be ready for peer pressure. You do not have to have an excuse but it can be helpful to know what you will say to anyone who tries to push you into drinking. People respect your decisions more when you're honest, but in the early days it might help to have a few excuses such as "I'm driving home", "I've a match in the morning" or "doctor's orders".

Remember, you do not have to drink to have a good night out!

There are many things you can do for fun! For example, some alternatives to drinking alcohol include going to the cinema with friends, meeting up with others for food, going for a walk, exercising with a friend or staying in and having a movie night! The key to success is having enjoyable alternatives.

Have other things to do that don't involve alcohol such as family time, hobbies, a course, or work. The less time you have for heavy drinking, the better your chances of success in the long run.

## THE COST OF A NIGHT OUT

It can be easy to lose track of what you are spending on a night out.

When you take into consideration the cost of drinks, a taxi, the nightclub, clothes and other extras, you could be spending a lot more than you thought!

Not spending that money on a night out means you can put it towards something that you really want. Try staying in for a weekend and not spending money on alcohol. Reward your hard work by buying something from the money saved on drink. Relish the freedom from hangovers and regrets. If you feel yourself slipping, remind yourself why you are cutting down, and of what you have achieved so far.



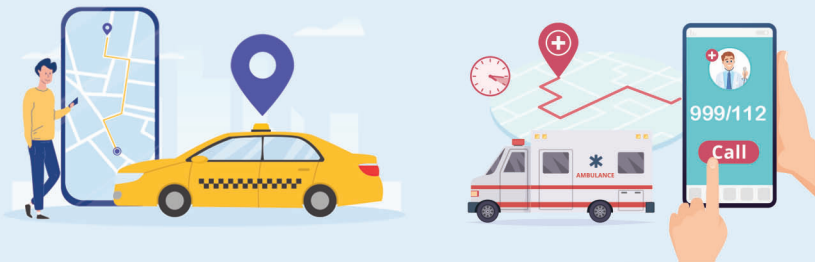
## STAYING SAFE

Staying safe on a night out is so important. Not just keeping safe while you are out, but getting home safely. It's a good idea to have a plan about how you will be getting home. You could take turns being the designated driver, or pre-book a taxi to get home.

### Never drive after drinking or taking drugs!

It's not just yourself you are putting at risk – think of other passengers, innocent people in other cars and pedestrians. Never take a lift with someone who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Have a back-up plan for when a designated driver ends up drinking. It's not worth the consequences - fines, penalty points, loss of life, injury.

Other things to remember are never to leave a party or club alone and never let your friends go alone. Be aware of the dangers of walking home under the influence, especially on poorly lit roads.



## DRINK SPIKING

Another key part of staying safe while out, make sure to know what you are drinking.

Check out the drinks calculator on <https://www2.hse.ie/alcohol/>

### Tips to avoid your drinks getting spiked:

- Don't go back to your drink if you've left it unattended.
- Doesn't have to be alcohol- any drink can be tampered with.
- Watch your drinks at all times.
- Look out for friends on a night out.
- When you're on a night out don't wander off by yourself - stay in a group.
- Always have your mobile phone fully charged and topped up with credit before you go out.



## SUPPORTING SOMEONE ELSE IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE

It is important to stay safe while you are out and get home safely. Would you know what to do if your friend is ill on a night out? Its okay to call parents or a next of kin. Your friend's wellbeing and life is more important than their parent being angry.

### SIGNS YOUR FRIEND MIGHT BE DRINKING TOO MUCH ...



If your friend needs help, step in and do what you can to stop your friend from drinking any more alcohol. Stay with them, and organize your journey home.

Get medical help if your friend can't stay awake, has vomited a lot and has been injured, especially if they have a head injury.

Their speech becoming slurred and being unsteady on their feet may be a sign that they have had too much to drink.

## HOW MUCH DO YOU DRINK?

It is important to know how much you are drinking. For example, cocktails look fruity and innocent, but there is usually quite a lot of alcohol in them.

## WHAT IS A STANDARD DRINK OF ALCOHOL?

Low risk weekly drinking limits are:

Less than 11 standard drinks (approximately 110g of alcohol) a week for women. And less than 17 (approximately 170g of alcohol) for men.

Spread out your drinking over the week with some alcohol-free days. Binge drinking – 6 or more drinks at a time.

ONE STANDARD DRINK



Half a Pint of regular beer, lager or cider



A small glass of wine



A single measure of spirits



A bottle of beer / Alcopop





**Mindspace Mayo is NOT a 24 hour emergency or crisis intervention service.**

Our phone, text and email services are NOT checked outside of office hours.

If you need help outside of office hours please see below a list of support services:

24 hour services

Phone

**Emergency Services..... 999 or 112**

**Samaritans.....116 123**

listening service for anyone going through a difficult time, or who may need any form of emotional support.

**Crisis Text Line .....Text HELLO to 50808**

**Childline..... 1800 666 666**

A confidential phone line for children and young people under 18 years of age.

**Pieta House..... 1800 247 247**

Suicide prevention helpline for anyone in a suicidal crisis or who has been bereaved by suicide.

**Useful tips on managing your alcohol use**

[www2.hse.ie/alcohol/](http://www2.hse.ie/alcohol/)

**HSE Drug Service Mayo.....094 9020430 / 096 60060**

Counselling to people aged under 18 years for alcohol and drug use.

# Growing up in the west

## County Report: Mayo

### Prevalence of substance use in young people

**45%**

of 15-16-year-olds reported being drunk more than once in their lifetime



**26%**

reported being drunk in the last month



**15%**

reported lifetime cannabis use



**2%**

reported lifetime use of ecstasy



**8%**

reported lifetime use of tranquillisers



**23%**

reported drinking in pubs or clubs

**26%**

reported drinking in the homes of friends



### Family Factors

**92%**



reported that it is rather or very easy to receive caring and warmth from their parents

**95% and 97%**

feel that their parents would disapprove strongly of them smoking or using cannabis compared to



**89%**

of parents know where their teenager spends their Saturday evenings

**67%**

often or always spend time with their parents at the weekends



**74%**

disapproving strongly of drunkenness



Teenagers whose parents are **less disapproving** of drunkenness are more than **two and a half**



as likely to have been drunk in the last month

### Peer Group Effects

**30%**



agree somewhat or agree strongly that it is important to drink so that you're not left out of the peer group. This compares to

**27%**

thought that their friends got drunk in the last month.

**13%** for smoking and **8%** for cannabis

When compared to the **26%** that actually did get drunk, this is a pretty good estimate. The teenagers who indicated their friends were drunk in the last month were more than three times as likely to have been drunk themselves than those whose friends were not drunk.



### Extracurricular Activities



**39%**

play sports with a club or team three times a week or more.

**54%**

exert themselves physically three times a week or more.



**29%**



report one hour or less of physical activity per week

Teenagers who are active in a sports club or team in Mayo are over

**three times**

less likely to smoke cigarettes than those who are not. They are also less likely to use cannabis. However, they are actually slightly more likely to get drunk.



### General wellbeing, including school and social environment

**87%** of participants feel safe in school and only



**6%** reported getting on badly with teachers

**48%**



reported getting 7 hours of sleep or less

Those teenagers out after midnight were **five times**



**43%**



reported more than 3 hours per day on social media

**70%** of boys and **51%** of girls reported their mental health as good or very good



**21%**



reported being out after midnight once or more in the last week

more likely to use cigarettes, **two and a half times** more likely to report drunkenness and **three times** as likely to use cannabis.

# your mental health.ie

Information | Support | Services

We all need to look after our mental health, and just like our physical health, it needs to be maintained. Here are some things you can do to look after your mental health:

## Keep active

Regular exercise can really give you a boost.

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## Talk about it

Problems feel smaller when they are shared with others.

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## Eat and sleep well

A balanced diet and a good sleep pattern will help the way you feel and think.

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## Drink less alcohol

Avoiding too much alcohol is important, especially if you're feeling down or worried.

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## Do something you enjoy

Setting aside quality time for yourself can really help, particularly if you are not feeling great.

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## Stay in touch

Trusted friends and family are important, especially at difficult times. You're not alone.

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## REMEMBER:

Everyone is different and we all need help from time to time. Asking for help is a sign of strength. Visit [yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie) for information on minding your mental health and supports and services.



Connecting for Life

[yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie)



Seirbhís Stáinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt | Building a  
Better Health  
Service

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## MINDSPACE MAYO

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*This booklet was designed by The Mindspace Youth Panel.*