



## Don't drink! It's not worth it tonight.

We have a great lifestyle in this country. We have a great climate, strong economy and a confident & positive sense of self. We know how to enjoy life and we generally don't take for granted how good we have it here.

Unfortunately, our layback, party lifestyle has also spawned one of the strongest alcohol-drinking cultures in the world. Australia is in the top 3 countries with an alarming social problem concerning the over-abuse of booze, and that culture is a hard one to shake.

It's especially hard for teenagers to weigh up the facts and make their own, independent decisions when it comes to drinking. Not only do we already have a drinking culture but add to that the pull of peer pressure, and a generation of parents who seem not only to approve of heavy drinking, but in many cases actually encourage, fund and almost force it.

It's no wonder that there's a huge expectation on formal night that everyone needs to get smashed. This is wrong, it's destructive and it's the quickest and surest way to ruin the one chance you have to create a lifetime memory of a great turning point in your life.

In most American states, the legal age for drinking is 21. It used to be the same here and there's a sound medical and scientific reason for that. The human brain isn't fully developed until age 20, and, during those formative teenage years, alcohol in large volumes can, and will, do permanent damage.

Being a teenager, you'll have so many reasons to feel confident. You define yourself and your identity, gain some independence and physically, you're approaching numerous peaks. This is the time in your life that you'll feel the most indestructible. Nature's installed that software on purpose. It's totally normal to think that nothing bad will happen to you, and that you can handle any situation you find yourself in. It's false bravado! You CAN get hurt, you CAN get into situations you can't get out of and bad

things CAN happen to you just as easily as anyone older or younger.

Alcohol WILL seriously diminish 2 major attributes that you need for survival, your ability to reason and judge things accurately, and your physical ability to perform normal tasks. At the same time, it increases your confidence beyond normal levels to unrealistic highs. What that means is that when you're drunk, you'll be unable to see straight, walk straight, talk straight and think straight but you'll THINK you can do all of these things better than everyone else in the room.

The formal is a ritzy affair where you spend all year planning, saving and choosing everything very carefully. The venue, the transport, the clothes, accessories, colours, fragrances, hair, makeup, partner, everything has to be perfect. Why would you go to so much trouble to get all of that so right and then risk throwing all of it away by being drunk?

This is a short list of the things that can go wrong for you if you drink on formal night...

- ⇒ You may have some sort of argument or emotional breakdown even before you get to the venue.
- ⇒ You may fall and ruin your outfit or hurt yourself.
- ⇒ You may get to the venue and security won't let you in to your formal.
- ⇒ You may trip on your new heels and break a heel, an ankle or a smile.
- ⇒ You may make a complete fool of yourself in front of your friends, and that's how they'll remember you forever.
- ⇒ You may get into a fight and get hurt or even thrown out.
- ⇒ You may throw up on yourself.
- ⇒ Worst of all, you may not actually remember much of the night at all.

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It's not worth it! Trust us when we tell you, we know what you're thinking. Let's see if any of these thoughts just went through your mind...

- ⇒ Oh I drink all the time and I know my limits.
- ⇒ I can handle it – no problem.
- ⇒ My friends will watch out for me.
- ⇒ My parents say it's a "right of passage".
- ⇒ Nothing can possibly go wrong at MY formal.
- ⇒ This stuff only happens to idiots.

We've been running teen social events for over 20 years and have literally heard hundreds of thousands of teenagers just like you say all of those things, then wind up crying in the toilets, throwing up on themselves, getting thrown out of venues, getting taken to hospital, getting taken home by Police, getting taken to the lockup for the night, winding up in court, winding up in trouble with their parents, winding up pregnant, winding up with incurable diseases, winding up having corrective facial surgery – the list goes on. In all cases, **ALL** cases, alcohol was to blame.

So lets look at the 3 main methods of alcoholism that will ruin your night. They are...

1. The "Pre's". Alcohol you drink before heading off to the formal.
2. Alcohol you smuggle in to the formal.
3. Alcohol you buy at the formal.

The pre-formal drinks at someone's home before the formal is an unfortunate tradition that has wedged itself in the formal experience. One glass of wine or champagne with your parents a couple of hours before the formal is OK, and quite legal for minors in most states. Leave it at that! Drinking excessively at the Pre's or moving off to another drinking venue between the Pre's and the formal is the path to a bad night. Turning up drunk to face security staff at the door, and trying to act straight gives you a 90/10 shot at going no further. Those are seriously bad odds when something as important as your whole formal experience is at stake.

Trying to smuggle alcohol into the formal is an even worse idea. Nowadays there is such sophisticated security equipment and procedures in use that there's a less than 5% chance of success, and in the 95% that get caught, 80% of those will most likely be refused entry. Those are seriously worse odds than simply turning up smashed.

Getting drunk on alcohol you buy at the formal is a mixed scenario. More than 70% of the venues hosting formals are NOT going to have any alcohol available, and those that are will be very swift to act the moment you show the first sign of intoxication. That means they'll be watching everyone very closely and don't need any decent excuse to throw you out. A venue liquor license costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to get, and takes months and sometimes years to approve. When you lose one, you never ever get it back and it can mean the end of the venue if that happens. They won't risk their license over you being drunk, believe me.

With all of this doom and gloom talk, we don't want you to think that we're just anti-alcohol. That's not the message. You may drink daily if that's your habit. You may be someone who needs a buzz to relax. Whatever the reason you may take a drink in NORMAL daily life, the message here is this. The formal comes once. ONCE! You may get married 2 or even 3 times but your formal is a one-time deal. If ever there was one single night when you should abstain from drinking, this is the one. No other night of your teen life will be more important and more fragile.

Don't blow it.

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