

Focus

1 Do you drink alcohol? Do you think there is an alcohol problem among young people?

Read about it

# When a drink with dad turns kids into drunks



drinks, according to a nationwide survey on young people and drinking.

Seventy-three per cent of 13- to 14-year-old children interviewed said they had had an alcoholic drink. As many as 55% of 10- to 12-year-olds said they had tried alcohol, and 45% of seven to nine-year-olds.

Experimentation with alcohol begins at an early age, typically in the form of a glass of wine shared with parents.

Drinkline, the national helpline for people with drink problems, said the dangers of alcohol were being overlooked because of concerns about drugs.

Sarah Watson said: "Many people act as though cigarettes can do more damage, and they take time to talk about drugs, but never about alcohol. When adults do talk about it, they just say it's really bad, and that's the end of the conversation."

"I could live without alcohol," said Sharon O'Dea, 15. "But if you go to a party, it is better than taking drugs."

More English teenagers drink alcohol than their contemporaries in France and Spain, according to a report last month.

The Observer/CHILDREN'S EXPRESS

Another morning, another hangover. Sarah Watson does not enjoy the experience. "It's not very nice being drunk," she says. "You get full of yourself and then you get a headache."

But Sarah is not an adult recovering from a heavy night in the pub. She is 12 and one of a growing number of young children who know the taste – and the effects – of alcohol.

Sarah is one of the lucky ones. She says her experience is relatively limited. But by the time they reach 14, most children have tried alcoholic

- 2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?
- a Sarah Watson doesn't like drink, but she likes its effects.
  - b 26% of children aged 14 have never tried alcohol.
  - c Almost 50% of nine-year-olds have had an alcoholic drink.
  - d Young children usually get their first drink from their brothers or sisters.
  - e According to Drinkline, everybody is now talking about alcohol problems.
  - f Sharon thinks that drugs are worse than alcohol.

**drunks** people who get drunk often  
**hangover** headache and tiredness a few hours after drinking too much  
**full of yourself** very self-confident  
**recovering** getting better after an illness  
**heavy** "heavy drinking" = drinking a lot  
**alcohol** all alcoholic drinks (eg. beer, wine, vodka)  
**helpline** a telephone number for people with problems  
**overlooked** missed, not noticed  
**concerns** worries, important considerations  
**contemporaries** people of the same age

Key Language

Look at this sentence from the article.

... by the time they reach 14, most children have tried alcoholic drinks...

**By** + time phrase has the idea of *already*. It is used with the **present perfect** for general statements and the **past perfect** for past facts.

Examples:

By the age of 18 most people have left school.

By 1997 Steffi Graf had won more than \$20 million.

3 Here are some facts about the life of Claudia, who is a brilliant mathematician. Use these phrases to complete the sentences.

- learn to speak quite well
- become a university professor
- finish school
- get a university degree
- learn to read
- start walking

- a By the age of six months, \_\_\_ .
- b By the age of one year, \_\_\_ .
- c By the age of three, \_\_\_ .
- d By the age of thirteen, \_\_\_ .
- e By the age of fifteen, *she had got a university degree.*
- f By the age of twenty-four, \_\_\_ .

4 Complete this sentence in three different ways.

By the age of seven, most children have \_\_\_ .

Now turn to page 104 for more practice!

Talk about it

5 Look at this chart. Do you have similar age limits in your country? Do you think the British limits are reasonable? Why/why not? Do a smoking/drinking survey of the students in your class.

LEGAL AGE LIMITS IN BRITAIN

5	drink alcohol at home
16	drink soft drinks in pubs drink alcohol with food in restaurants
18	buy alcohol drink alcohol in pubs
no limit	smoke cigarettes

6 Drinking alcohol is an accepted social practice in most world countries. But in Libya, Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries, alcohol is illegal. (It was illegal in the USA from 1920 to 1933 – the Prohibition era.) Make a list of positive and negative points about alcohol.

7 You work for an advertising agency, and you have to create a campaign against Drinking and Driving (driving a car after you have drunk alcohol). In groups, prepare a poster – with a picture and a slogan. Compare your work with other groups and vote for the best campaign.

