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Binge Drinking

Research has shown that binge drinking is at epidemic proportions among young Australians, with around 170,000 12- to 17-year-olds drinking at dangerous levels in any given week.

Binge drinking, or drinking heavily over a short period of time, is usually done with the purpose of getting drunk.

However, binge drinking is a major risk factor for illnesses such as liver disease, pancreatitis, diabetes and cancer of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver and breast – not to mention brain damage.

Next to tobacco, alcohol is the second largest cause of drug-related deaths and hospitalizations in Australia.

More than 50% of all car accidents, suicides and homicides are related to alcohol. It can also lead to sexual assault, domestic violence and family breakdown.

Alcopops, or pre-mixed alcoholic sodas, are steadily becoming more popular among young drinkers. These spirit-based beverages are usually sweet and brightly-coloured, making them look like soft drinks, but masking the fact that they contain varying degrees of alcohol. Some contain as much as two or three standard drinks per bottle.

The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends that both men and women limit themselves to two standard drinks per day and have at least two alcohol-free days a week.

However, it's important to note that 'saving up' drinks for a few days and then drinking them all at once is still binge drinking.

If you or someone you care about has a problem with alcohol, please speak with your local doctor or phone 1800 422 599.

And, of course, if you care about your family and friends, make sure they never drink and drive.