

Heavy drinking sessions can change a reliable, caring parent into an unpredictable one



For more information on alcohol and how it affects families, visit [www.alcoholireland.ie](http://www.alcoholireland.ie)



**Is Drinking  
Affecting Your  
Family?**



When someone in a family drinks too much or too often, their alcohol use can affect the whole family. When that person is a parent, then drinking can affect how they parent.

Problems for parents become problems for their children.

Alcohol could be a problem when:

- There are money problems because of drinking
- There are fights and arguments when drinking, or about drinking
- Accidents and injuries happen because of drinking
- Friendships and family relationships are strained or damaged due to drinking
- Drinking and dealing with its after effects is the focus of family life

**You don't have to be an alcoholic for your drinking to affect your child**



## Parenting and alcohol

Being a parent is probably the most important job you can do. It can be a tough job but the reality is children depend on their parents. They rely on us for the basics: food; clothes; a safe and warm home. Children need care and support, as well as clear and consistent boundaries so they can grow and develop.

Sometimes a parent's drinking can get in the way of parenting. Heavy drinking sessions can change a reliable, caring parent into an unpredictable one. Drinking can disrupt important family routines such as mealtimes, school and bedtimes creating worry and fear for children. The question – will Mam or Dad be drinking today? – can take over a child's life.

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## What can you do?

- Listen to the children involved. Ask how they are. See the family from their point of view
- Talk about what's happening, whether it's your alcohol use, or your partner's alcohol use that's causing problems. Don't isolate yourself from your friends and your family. Ask for help and support
- Talk to your local or family doctor. She or he will be able to put you in contact with supports and/or services to meet the needs of your family. Most referrals to alcohol services come from GPs

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- If you think a friend or relative's drinking is affecting their parenting, ask them about it, listen and offer support. Advise that they contact their GP for an assessment, and to find out where they can access supports and services they might find useful
- When a parent gets effective help for their drinking, there can be real benefits for their children
- **If you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child living with parental alcohol problems, contact the local Health Services Executive (HSE) office and ask to speak to the social work team. You can get the number by calling the HSE Infoline 1850 24 1850 which operates between 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday or on [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**