

THE FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

The Chief Medical Officer has recently announced that **nobody younger than 15 years old should be allowed to drink alcohol** and that even a small amount can be dangerous for children, as it can damage their brains while they're still growing...

...but, in our drinking culture, **how can we change things?**

- It is suspected that early exposure to alcohol may "prime" the brain to enjoy alcohol by creating a link between alcohol and pleasurable reward. The younger that children drink, the more likely they are to have alcohol-related problems later in life. It is now commonplace to see men and women in their twenties with end-stage alcoholic liver damage.
- Recent comparative studies are finding that British children are more likely to get drunk than those of any other country.
- Child alcoholics are a growing problem, with an increasing number being treated in hospital every day for alcohol-related illnesses, including mental disorders and liver disease.
- Alcohol is also contributing to the obesity epidemic among children and adults, yet few people are aware of the connection.
- A new paper in the British Journal of Psychiatry reports that urgent action is needed to prevent "an under-recognised, alcohol-related, dementia time bomb" facing young drinkers.
- A myth persists that introducing children to alcohol prevents heavy drinking and alcoholism later. However, it is now proven that exposure to alcohol at an early age actually increases a child's likelihood of becoming a heavy drinker.
- Another myth involves the 'continental approach' to drinking being healthier than Britain's. In fact, France's death rate from cirrhosis of the liver is twice that of the United Kingdom.
- A new approach to alcohol education is needed for a new generation.

the facts about alcohol

Fascinating one hour presentations based on medical research and facts rather than experiential examples.

Individually tailored to different year groups*, pupils are encouraged, in a scientific and engaging way, to view alcohol in a completely new light.

by Dr Aric Sigman



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Dr ARIC SIGMAN

Dr Aric Sigman is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, a Member of the Institute of Biology and has received the Chartered Scientist award from the Science Council. He has worked on teenage health education campaigns with the Department of Health. Beyond his credentials, he has to face the issue of alcohol with his own four children, and finds it easy to connect with young people and children on drinking.

An American, Dr Sigman has lived in Britain for many years. He has worked in the pop music industry and seen how the pressures and expectations of celebrity culture lead to excessive drinking among the rich and famous, and how the images we see of smiling successful pop singers and celebrities often don't show the glass in their hand. He has a long history of health education work for children and young people as the psychologist on the BBC's *Going Live* and then *Live & Kicking* for most of the 1990's. He also wrote health and psychology advice columns for several BBC children's and teenage magazines. He was recently the *Brain & Behaviour* columnist for The Times Educational Supplement magazine.

Unlike most speakers on the subject, Dr Sigman has never had an alcohol problem and so his approach to enlightening children and teenagers is very different and not dependent on a 'you don't want to end up like me, do you?' approach. Instead, he is able to explain the consequences of teenage drinking, using impartial new scientific information to make them think and decide for themselves.

for further details or to make a booking, please contact

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