

# Entertaining Ideas

## A Toast To Alcohol-Safe Celebrations

(NAPSA)—A growing number of people are planning to celebrate the holidays in a style that's likely to be safe and full of fun. The only thing missing might be the alcohol.

Experts believe the holidays can be particularly dangerous because more people celebrate by over-indulging, making themselves susceptible to alcohol-related problems. It's now estimated that 50 percent of all holiday traffic fatalities involve alcohol.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways to enjoy the holidays without having alcoholic beverages as the center of attention. Here are a few tips on holding alcohol-safe and drug-free events from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—or SAMHSA.

### Get the Party Started

- Encourage lively conversation and group activities, such as games that keep the focus on fun—not alcohol.
- Prepare plenty of foods so guests will not drink on an empty stomach, and avoid too many salty foods, which tend to make people thirsty.
- Never serve alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age, and never ask children to serve alcohol.

- Make it clear that no drug use will be tolerated.

### If You Choose to Serve Alcohol

- Offer a variety of non-alcoholic beverages for those who prefer not to drink alcohol. You could even host a contest to create non-alcoholic drink recipes. If you prepare an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, like fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed into the



**Experts claim more than half of Americans do not drink alcoholic beverages.**

bloodstream faster with a carbonated base.

- Don't let guests mix their own drinks. Choose a reliable bartender who abstains from alcohol at the party and who can keep track of the size and number of drinks that guests consume.

### Before Your Guests Depart

- Stop serving alcohol one hour before the party ends because only time sobers an individual who has been drinking.
- If some guests have too much to drink, drive them home or arrange for alternative transportation.

For more information on organizing alcohol-safe and drug-free parties, contact SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.