

# Party Planning Tips

## 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, full of fun and without a focus on alcohol.

The move to serve less or no alcohol during holiday entertaining may be the result of greater concerns for health and safety and recognition that almost 50 percent of adults do not drink alcohol. Studies show that the holidays can be particularly dangerous when events focus on alcohol, making party-goers susceptible to alcohol-related tragedies. 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 federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (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 nonalcoholic beverages for those who pre-



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fer not to drink alcohol. You could even host a contest to create recipes for nonalcoholic drinks. If you prepare an alcoholic punch, use a noncarbonated base, such as fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed into the 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 or visit [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov).