



Holiday Hints

The Truth About Alcohol During The Holidays: How To Eat, Drink And Be Merry (Responsibly)

(NAPSA)—The holiday season is a time for celebration, renewals of faith, and setting goals for the year ahead. During family and social gatherings, champagne corks may be popped and wine passed as family and friends gather. While holiday parties invoke the spirit of the season, unhealthy alcohol use—drinking over the recommended limit of three drinks for women and four drinks for men per day—can lead to dangerous consequences for yourself and those around you.

Many of us like to celebrate during the holidays. But the truth is, more people are likely to drink beyond their limits during this season than at other times of the year. Consequences of unhealthy drinking can range from the harmless (but potentially embarrassing) to the destructive, including driving while intoxicated and risky sexual behaviors.

Despite the potential dangers, drinking during the holidays can be done responsibly. Here are six steps you can take to prevent and reduce the risks associated with overindulgence of holiday drinking:

1. Abstain. You don't need alcohol to be the life of the party. Bring a fun, nonalcoholic beverage of your choice to celebrations where you know there will be alcohol so you don't deviate from your plan.

2. Pace yourself. Know what constitutes a standard drink and have no more than one per hour.

3. Have “drink spacers.” Make every other drink a nonalcoholic one. Water is a great choice.

4. Do not make alcohol the central focus of the gathering or party. In place, engage in other healthier food, drink and entertainment activities.

5. Make plans to get home safely. Remember that a designated driver is someone who hasn't had any alcohol, not simply the person in your group who drank the least.



This holiday season, plan ahead to serve or drink alcohol responsibly.

6. Make the holiday season a time for wellness. Help alleviate the stress that holidays can bring by focusing on self-care. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Eight Dimensions of Wellness can help you identify healthy habits and avoid alcohol misuse during the holiday season: www.samhsa.gov/wellness-initiative/eight-dimensions-wellness.

It may surprise you, but during the holidays, those who do not normally drink alcohol need to be as cautious as people who drink more often. Low tolerance and unfamiliarity with alcoholic drinks are two chief contributors to drinking too much, too quickly. Occasional and heavy drinkers also need to be on alert since they may feel their increased drinking levels are appropriate and normal, because their peers, who drink infrequently, have increased their level of drinking.

Holidays are a great time to let loose—just remember not to lose track of what and how much alcohol you are drinking. Stay mindful by drinking responsibly and safely. If you have a drinking problem, are concerned with your alcohol use or suspect a loved one needs help, you can find treatment securely and anonymously by using the Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov> or by calling the National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357).