



The holiday season is filled with celebrations and gatherings with family and friends. Many people may find that alcohol is more present than usual, and even people who do not usually drink alcohol may overindulge more at this time of year.

For party hosts:

- Offer a variety of alcohol-free drinks—water, juices, sparkling sodas. Alcohol-free drinks help counteract the dehydrating effects of alcohol. Also, the other fluids may slow the rate of alcohol absorption into the body and reduce the peak alcohol concentration in the blood. They also provide your guests with alternatives to alcohol.
- Provide a variety of healthy foods and snacks. Food can slow the absorption of alcohol and reduce the peak level of alcohol in the body by about one-third. Food can also minimize stomach irritation and gastrointestinal distress the following day.
- **Stop serving alcohol early.** Consider closing the "bar" and offering coffee and dessert about 90 minutes before the party is scheduled to end. This gives guests time to sober up before heading home
- Help your guests get home safely—use designated drivers and taxis. It is your responsibility to help them get home safely. Anyone getting behind the wheel of a car should not have ingested any alcohol. According to the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#), 40 percent of traffic fatalities during the holidays involve a driver who is impaired by alcohol, compared to 28 percent for the rest of the year.
- If you are a parent, understand the underage drinking laws—and set a good example.

For party guests

- **Plan your transportation.** Before attending a holiday party, decide how you will get home safely. Options include, designating a sober driver, using a rideshare service or taxi, or making arrangements to stay at the host's residence.
- **Pace your drinks and stay hydrated.** To manage your alcohol intake, alternate between alcoholic beverages and water or other non-alcoholic drinks. A good practice is to have no more than one standard drink per hour, as this is the rate at which the liver can process alcohol.
- **Eat before and during the event.** Having a substantial meal with protein and carbohydrates can slow the absorption of alcohol into your bloodstream.

- **Remember that alcohol affects judgment.** While you may feel more confident after a drink, your inhibitions and judgment are already impaired, which is why it is crucial to arrange for safe transport in advance.

If celebrating at an establishment, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your drink. Be aware of drink spiking. Drink spiking is the act of putting alcohol or drugs into someone's drink without their knowledge or consent. Strategies you can use to combat drink spiking include:

- **Watch your drink at all times:** Never leave your drink unattended. If you step away, get a new one.
- **Accept drinks only from trusted sources:** Only accept drinks from friends or directly from the bartender. Never take drinks from strangers.
- **Use drink covers or anti-spiking products:** Drink lids, stoppers, or test strips can help deter or detect tampering.
- **Buddy system:** Stick with friends, look out for each other, and consider designating a sober buddy to monitor the group.
- **Avoid communal containers:** Steer clear of punch bowls or shared drinks, which are easier to spike.
- **Stay alert:** Be aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious behavior to venue staff or security.