



have a
Merry Christmas
this year....

....for all the right reasons

**PRACTICAL TIPS & ADVICE FOR
MAKING THE MOST OF
THE FESTIVE SEASON**



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It's hard to believe but it is only a matter of weeks before Christmas is upon us again. The Christmas season can be a very busy one; last minute shopping, work Christmas party, visiting friends and relations and family coming to stay.

Whilst all these events can be very enjoyable, they can also be stressful and alcohol is often at the centre of these occasions at this time of year. The question is – how are you going to survive all these Christmas celebrations where alcohol is involved?

Drinking excessively can take a bit of a toll on your mental and physical health, especially if you are out night after night. Here are a few tips to take it easy, stay safe and make sure you're in still one piece by New Year's Day!

Remember you don't have to drink to have a good time and give yourself a few nights off too!

Happy Christmas!

READ THE FOLLOWING TIPS TO HELP YOU HAVE A FUN AND SAFE NIGHT OUT

BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT

Eat something: Try to eat a big carbohydrate meal like pasta or potatoes. The 'soakage' will help slow down the rate that alcohol reaches your body

- Skip the 'pre – drinking': lots of people drink at home or in a friend's house before they go out. While this saves some money, it's much harder to keep track of your drinking since measures will be larger and you are more likely to binge.

Remember only time will get rid of alcohol from your body.



- Start later: if you know it's going to be a long, late night, arrive at the last possible minute. That's one way to limit how much you take on board on a night out
- Get home safely: pre-book your taxi or arrange for someone to collect you. Never ever drink and drive

WHEN YOU ARE OUT

- Keep it slow: getting very drunk, very fast probably just means you'll end up in a mess or going home early. Don't down your drinks in one go
- Drink water or a non- alcoholic drink in between alcoholic drinks – this will give your body a bit of time to break down the alcohol that's already in your system
- Don't get into rounds if you can help it. Most people end up drinking at a faster pace than they normally would
- Do not leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from a stranger



BE AWARE OF DRINK SPIKING

- Be aware of your tolerance to alcohol. If you feel odd, nauseous or unusually drunk after a couple of drinks when normally you'd feel fine, go somewhere you feel safe
- If you are with a friend you trust, tell them why you're worried. Get them to help you home and ask them to stay with you until the drug has worn off
- If you are alone or with a stranger, go to the pub landlord or manager and ask for their help. Wait in their office while they ring your partner, a friend or a taxi to take you home safely
- Don't let a stranger help you – they could be the person who spiked your drink
- Never ever leave a drink unattended. If you go to the toilet or out for a cigarette, take your drink with you or finish it off before you go. If for whatever reason you have left it unattended, do not drink it.

Many people like a drink or two at a party or in the pub, but remember, alcohol makes you more relaxed and could affect your judgement.



- Do not go home alone with someone you don't know
- Do not get into a car driven by someone who's had a drink
- Never walk home alone
- Do not go somewhere that is not familiar to you with a stranger
- If you're out with friends, stay with them or make sure they know where you are at all times

FOR PARENTS

Alcohol can be enjoyed socially among friends however, it is important to be vigilant of how your drinking habits affect your children's attitude to alcohol this Christmas

- It is important to be mindful of the messages we are sending to our children. It is pointless to tell your children not to drink to excess if their parents are getting drunk in front of them
- Young people learn more from what you do



- Research shows that young people's attitude to alcohol develops directly from the behaviour of their parents.
- Know where your children are and who they are with
- Drop them off at events & collect them again afterwards

WHAT DO I DO IF I KNOW OR SUSPECT MY TEENAGER IS DRINKING?

- Talk to them about your concerns, without accusing or arguing
- Ask them not to drink
- Suggest alternatives to your teenager, such as non-alcoholic beers, wines and cocktails
- If you or another parent drops off and picks up, you have control of what time they arrive and what time they go home
- Most underage drinking is done before and after the disco



- If your teenager knows they will have to face you or another adult at the end of the night they may drink much less, if at all
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- (Source: 'Straight Talk' A Guide for Parents on Teenage Drinking. Available to download or order at www.healthpromotion.ie)

What to do when a friend is drunk and out of control!

If a friend is very drunk they're not going to be thinking straight. It's up to you to make sure they get home safe and hopefully they'll do the same for you if it's ever needed!

- In a serious case of drunkenness, a person might lose consciousness (pass out). If this happens, put them in the recovery position (lying on their side), check that they're breathing and that nothing is blocking their mouth (such as vomit or an ice cube) and call for help
- Don't leave the unconscious person, make somebody else go and call an ambulance if you can't wake them up
- If your friend isn't breathing they need immediate help. Get someone to call an ambulance and shout for help from anyone who has first aid training



- If your friend is vomiting constantly or choking when they vomit then stay with them and get someone to call an ambulance
- Try not to let drunken friends leave on their own or with a stranger. Insist on staying with them until you're sure they get home safely.
Do not leave your friend alone when they are drunk
- Do not give a drunk person a cold shower, as the shock might make them pass out
- Don't try to walk the drunk person around
- Don't provoke a fight by arguing with or laughing at someone (friend or other!) who is drunk
- Do not try to counsel the drunk person – confront their behaviour later when they are sober. If you're worried about a friend drinking too much, talk to them about cutting back on alcohol when they are sober
- Do not give the drunk person anything to eat or drink – black coffee and food will not help, and they may choke
- For sobering up, there is no substitute for time. It takes as many hours as the number of drinks taken and can take 24 hours or more for the after-effects of alcohol to wear off fully



- Don't let a drunken friend or someone who has recently been drunk, drive home. Hide the car keys if you need to
- *(Source: Article by SpunOut. Available at: <http://www.spunout.ie/health/Alcohol-%2526-drugs/Alcohol/Helping-drunk-friends>)*





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