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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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Start Talking!

Building a Drug-Free Future



Know! To Keep It Safe this Holiday Season – Adults and Alcohol

The Holiday season is upon us, which means more adults will be consuming alcoholic drinks and in higher quantities. This time of year also puts more people on the roads, as they travel to see family and friends, near and far. It makes sense, then, that this season becomes one of the most dangerous times of the year for alcohol-related accidents and fatalities.

One factor that contributes to increased drinking is the amount of stress that tends to accompany the holidays, and more people unfortunately turning to alcohol in an attempt to ease that pressure. Another major reason drinking spikes is because there are simply more opportunities to drink socially due to the various parties.

Depending on where you live, this time of the year can also bring dangerous road conditions. Adding alcohol to the mix is no doubt dangerous and, far too often, deadly.

In 2016, more than one in four of the nation's total fatalities were due to alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. To be exact, 10,497 people lost their lives because of alcohol-impaired drivers. The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data shows that "human choices," including drinking and driving, are linked to 94% of serious crashes.

As an adult, if you make the choice to drink, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) encourages the following safety measures:

Remember that alcohol's effects begin quickly: Long before a person shows physical signs of drinking, decision-making abilities and driving-related skills are already diminished.

Even when drinking stops – alcohol's effects do not: Alcohol continues to affect the body and brain long after the last drink has been finished. And no, coffee does not sober a person up. In fact, there are no quick fixes; only time will help.

Before you celebrate – PLAN AHEAD:

1. Make plans to get home safely: Remember that a designated driver is someone who doesn't drink any alcohol, not simply the person in your group who drinks the least.
2. Pace yourself: Know what a standard drink equates to and have no more than one per hour – and no more than 4 drinks for men and 3 drinks for women per day
3. Have "drink spacers": Make every other drink a nonalcoholic one



Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



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Do not underestimate the effects of alcohol, and do not let alcohol steal the focus of a holiday party. The primary reason for gathering and celebrating this season is to be with and enjoy your family and friends.

Most importantly, be fully aware that your children are watching and learning from your choices surrounding alcohol. Teach them, by way of action, that adults can make the choice to have an alcoholic drink, yet still behave safely and responsibly.

For additional resources and information, including what counts as a standard drink, visit [NIAAA's Rethinking Drinking](#).

Sources: [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health: Holiday Fact Sheet - The Truth About Holiday Spirits How to Celebrate Safely This Season](#). [National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Rethinking Drinking: Alcohol and Your Health](#). [Drew W. Edwards, Ed.D., MS - PsychCentral - Holiday Drinking: Keep It Safe](#). [National Center for Statistics and Analysis. \(2017, October\). 2016 fatal motor vehicle crashes: Overview. \(Traffic Safety Facts Research Note, Report No. DOT HS 812 456\). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.](#)

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