

# HINTS FOR SENSIBLE, MODERATE, AND RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND PARTY HOSTING

Adapted from Engs, R.C. *Alcohol and Other Drugs: Self Responsibility*. Tichenor Publishing Company, Bloomington, IN, 1987

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## HINTS FOR DRINKING

Alcohol in the form of beer, wine, spirits, and ciders is consumed by many North Americans and by people in many other cultures around the world. Drinking, like eating, or any social activity, has some guidelines to help the participant get more enjoyment out of the activity. Gobbling down half a chocolate cake at a party would not be considered responsible eating or even polite in most cultures. The same goes for drinking. Responsible choices concerning sensible drinking may mean not drinking, such as when a person is sick, taking medications or being the designated driver. Responsible drinking means that you never have to feel sorry for what has happened while you were drinking. Basically, this means not becoming drunk. The following are some hints to help you drink responsibly and derive more enjoyment and pleasure from drinking if you choose to consume alcohol.

- 1. Know your limit.** If you do not already know how much alcohol you can handle without losing control, try it out one time at home with your parents or friend present. Explain to them what you are attempting to learn. Most people find that no more than a drink an hour will keep them in control of the situation and avoid drunkenness. Have your parents or friend videotape you while you are attempting to see what happens when you consume more than the recommended one drink per hour.
- 2. Eat food while you drink.** It is particularly good to eat high protein foods such as cheese and peanuts, which help to slow the absorption of alcohol into the circulatory system. Many cultures consume alcohol only with food to prevent various problems.
- 3. Sip your drink.** If you gulp a drink for the effect, you are losing a pleasure of drinking, namely tasting and smelling the various flavors. This is particularly true for wine.
- 4. Accept a drink only when you really want one.** At a party if someone is trying to force another drink on you, ask for ice or drink a non-alcoholic beverage.

- 5. Cultivate taste. Choose quality rather than quantity.** Learn the names of fine wines, whiskeys, and beers. Learn what beverage goes with what foods.
- 6. Skip a drink now and then.** When at a party, have a nonalcoholic drink between the alcoholic one to keep your blood alcohol concentration down. Space your alcoholic drinks out to keep the desired blood alcohol concentration.
- 7.** When drinking out, if you must drive home, **have your drinks with a meal**, not afterwards. This allows time for the alcohol to be burned up and for it to be absorbed slowly into the circulatory system.
- 8. Beware of unfamiliar drinks.** Such drinks as zombies and other fruit and rum drinks can be deceiving, as the alcohol is not always detectable, and it is difficult to space them out.
- 9. Make sure that drinking improves social relationships rather than impairs them.** Serve alcohol as an adjunct to an activity rather than as the primary focus. Have a German night party rather than just getting together to drink beer.
- 10. Appoint a designated driver.** Have someone available who will not be drinking and will drive all drinkers home. This is critical if the person has consumed more than one drink per hour.
- 11. Use alcohol carefully in connection with other drugs.** This includes over-the-counter drugs such as sleeping pills and cold or cough medicines. Alcohol should be avoided while taking certain antibiotics, arthritic, anti-depressant, and many other prescription medications. Check with your physician or pharmacy before you drink while on any prescription drug.
- 12. Respect the rights of individuals who do not wish to drink.** It is considered impolite to attempt to get people to drink who do not wish to. They may abstain for religious or medical reasons, because they are recovering alcoholics, or they just may not like the taste and effect it has on them.
- 13. Avoid drinking mixed drinks on an empty stomach on a hot day.** This might produce hypoglycemia, which can cause dizziness, weakness, and mood change.
- 14. If you know that you will have to drive after consuming alcohol, limit your consumption to no more than one drink an hour.** In reality many people who have a drink with a meal have no other option other than to drive home. Consuming **NO MORE than one** glass of wine, beer or mixed drink with a meal in a hour is generally safe for driving.

**15. *Upper limit of drinks for males is 21 and for females is 14 drinks per week***. Most studies suggest that these limits are safe for health. In older individuals moderate drinking may help prevent against heart disease. This amount, of course, is spread out over a weeks period. This means for **males no more than 2-3 drinks and for females 1-2 drinks per day** preferably with meals.

## HINTS FOR PARTY HOSTING

Most people love to go to parties, and most find that parties are fun to give. The following tips for being a responsible host will give more pleasure to you and your guests.

- 1. *Plan people movement***. Make sure that people can move around and meet each other. If it means putting the sofa in a corner, do so.
- 2. *The bartender***. If you plan to have a friend act as "bartender," make sure that he or she is not an eager pusher who uses the role to put an extra shot in every's glass or keep filling up half empty cups with more beer.
- 3. *Pace the drinks***. Serve drinks at regular, reasonable intervals. A drink-an-hour schedule usually means that good company prevails and you can avoid intoxication. Use small cups for beer drawn out of kegs rather than large ones.
- 4. *Don't double up***. Many mature and wise people count and pace their drinks. If you serve doubles, they will be drinking twice as much as they planned. Doubling up is considered rude.
- 5. *Push the snacks***. Make sure that people are eating along with drinking. Have plenty of high quality snacks such as cheese, meats, nuts, etc.
- 6. *Don't push the drinks***. Let the glass be empty before you offer a refill.
- 7. *Serve nonalcoholic beverages also***. Remember that many people do not drink and may be on medications or recovering alcoholics. Make sure that you have something nonalcoholic to drink such as good quality soft drinks, pop, and juice. Non alcoholic wine is great for a formal dinner.
- 8. *Closing the party***. Decide, in advance, when you want your party to end. At this time, stop serving alcohol and serve coffee and a substantial snack. This provides some non-drinking time before your guests drive home. Coffee does not "sober up" intoxicated people and neither do cold showers. All you get is a "wide awake and freezing drunk."

**8. Don't allow intoxicated guests to drive home.** If you find that one of your friends has consumed too much alcohol, let them sleep at your house, have someone else drive them home, or call a taxi. In some communities on special holidays such as New Years even communities offer free taxi services.

**Alcohol has been used by most cultures and if you do chose to drink, please do so in a responsible, safe, sensible, and healthy way.**