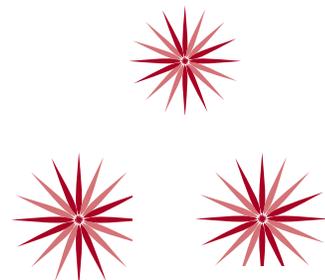




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HMWS NEWSLETTER



STAY SAFE BULLETIN RESPONSIBLE HOLIDAY DRINKING

Toasting family and friends with a glass of wine or other alcoholic drinks over the holidays is a tradition for many Canadians. However, drinking or serving too much alcohol can lead to health and safety issues as well as other problems.

Alcohol is a drug; a depressant that slows down your body's central nervous system. Depending on how much you drink, alcohol can affect your concentration, speech, balance, vision, coordination and judgement.

Minimizing Your Risk:

- * Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. Your risk of injury increases with each additional drink,
- * Eat something before drinking, or drink with meals. It is important not to drink on an empty stomach.
- * Try alternating alcoholic beverages with caffeine-free non-alcoholic drinks to limit the amount you drink in the three-hour period.
- * Drink only if you want to. Do not feel pressured into accepting a drink.
- * Do not drive. Instead, take a taxi, use public transportation, walk, or decide in advance who will be the designated driver.

As a host, you can protect yourself and your guests by following these tips:

- * Limit how much you drink yourself, so you can maintain control of things.
- * Before the party, ask someone to assist you if problems arise.
- * Provide alcohol-free drinks, such as coffee, tea, pop, fruit punch and juice, along with alcoholic drinks.
- * Mix and serve drinks yourself or appoint someone responsible as the bartender. Guests tend to drink more when they serve themselves.
- * Serve food. However, avoid salty, sweet or greasy foods because they make people thirstier.
- * Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends.
- * Do not rely on coffee to sober guests up. Coffee will only makes them more alert, not sober.
- * Encourage guests to plan ahead, by naming designated drivers, leaving their cars at home, take taxis or public transport, or walk. Have cash and taxi numbers ready.
- * Be prepared for overnight guests by ensuring you have blankets, sleeping bags and pillows on hand.

