

Foster Care to Good Health

Fall 2016

New Year's Eve is a big party night, and we hope you have somewhere fun to go, someone wonderful to dance with, and a beautiful new outfit. Of course, Chinese carryout eaten on the sofa watching the ball drop in Times Square is nice, too. On New Year's, it's easy to feel like you're the only person in the world who is staying home with a good book or movie. This is simply not true. While going out on New Year's can be fun, it can also end up being one of the most overrated nights of the whole year. **Don't worry about anyone else's expectations. Do what is right for YOU.**

At New Year's Eve parties, alcohol flows pretty freely. Drinking is illegal if you haven't reached the age of 21, and even if you're older there are plenty of reasons not to drink or to drink in moderation.

If you are going to drink on New Year's Eve, here are four things to remember:

1. Have a drinking buddy. Agree with a friend that the two of you will drink together and stay together. Alcohol is involved in over 90% of campus rapes, and 70% of college students admit to engaging in unplanned sexual activity when drunk. These things are much less likely with a drinking buddy.

2. Know what you're drinking, and know your limit. Unless you trust the person handing you a drink, never accept an open glass or mixer. Don't grab a drink from the punch bowl. And once you have a drink, never let it out of your hand even to go to the bathroom.

A "drink" is considered one bottle of beer or wine cooler, one shot of hard liquor, or one glass of wine. Most people are intoxicated after two to three drinks, and five drinks in one night is a binge. Count your drinks! If you can't remember how many drinks you've had, you've had too many.

3. Know how you're getting home. Before you go out, plan on how you're getting home. Agree on a designated driver, or arrange to crash with a friend. Keep \$20 safely in your wallet in case you need to call a cab. If your school or community has a "safe ride" program get their number and keep it in your cell phone. Never walk back home alone if you've had a few drinks, and **never EVER drink and drive or get in the car with a drunken friend. Automobile accidents are the #1 cause of death among college students, and half of those accidents are alcohol-related.**

4. Coffee doesn't sober you up, it just wakes you up. The only thing that will sober you up is time, and it takes about an hour to metabolize the alcohol in one "drink" as we listed them in #2. If you drink too much too fast, what alcohol your liver can't process will enter your blood stream and cause

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alcohol poisoning. Sleeping it off is a good thing, BUT - ***if your friend passes out drunk, turn him on his side so that if he vomits, he does not choke on it. If your friend shows any of the following signs, call 911:***

- Irregular breathing
- Pale, cold, clammy skin
- Confusion or stupor (vacant stare; nonresponsive but awake)
- Vomiting/passing out (visit <http://www.utdallas.edu/partyfoul/alcoholpoisoning/> for more information)

Well, this advice does not mean don't have fun. Have a wonderful New Year's Eve! Party hearty if that's your thing, but stay safe. Know your limits, know your friends, and know your surroundings.