



December 2018 Newsletter

Here's to Safe Celebrations for the Holiday Season! By Pamela Erickson

The holidays are a great time of year to celebrate with family and friends--and even better without the regrets of having overdone it the night before. Luckily, there are a lot of alternatives now to higher potency beverages and more acceptance around drinking less, or not at all. More people—especially the young—are looking for healthier lifestyles. So here are some ideas for enjoying a safe and happy holiday season.

This is a good time to try low- and non-alcoholic beverages.

As this market sector grows, more and more new high-quality products are added to bars and store shelves. According to one expert, “Low-alcohol beverages is one of the emerging trends in the global alcohol drinks market...as consumers are currently opting for a healthier lifestyle...” As a host, you can provide guests with options that go beyond drinking cocktail mixers without alcohol. You might take the time to inform your guests about these products, since many may not have tried them. You also might consider taking some to parties to share with other guests. And, when going out, ask your server about low- and non-alcoholic options. This will let them know there is a market for such options—you might even get a recommendation for something new from a savvy bartender.

If you consume alcohol, monitoring your drinks will help you stay within moderate guidelines.

There is an excellent government website that can help you maintain a moderate lifestyle. It answers questions such as “How much is too much?” (<https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/How-much-is-too-much/>). This website will help you monitor your drinking by suggesting you keep count of “standard drinks” consumed. But this may not be easy since there is such a wide range of alcohol content in drinks. A “standard drink” contains 0.6 ounces of ethanol which equals 12 ounces of 5% ABV beer, 5 ounces of 12% ABV wine or 1.5 ounces of 40% ABV spirits. However, the drinks you order are often more than this standard. Beer may be

served in 16-ounce pint glasses and can have an alcohol content of 4% for a stout or 7.5% for a stronger IPA. The wine you order may vary widely from a 5% ABV Moscato to a Zinfandel at 16%. Or, the 12% wine may be over-poured so you are really drinking one-and-a-half to two standard drinks. If you order a standard shot of a 40% alcohol spirit drink, 1.5 ounces is a standard drink. But, some specialty drinks have multiple shots, so you may be drinking two or three standard drinks in one glass.

Remember that drinking and driving can be a dangerous proposition.

It may be difficult to measure impairment which is usually assumed to be at a .08 Blood Alcohol Content level. The BAC you reach varies with many factors such as how much you weigh, whether you have an empty stomach and whether you are male or female. The safest alternative is not to drink and drive. Instead, consider a taxi, ride-share or a non-drinking friend.

If you have over-indulged, a short period of abstinence may be able to reset your relationship with alcohol.

In Britain, the “Dry January” program expects over 4 million to participate. There is even a Dry January app that shows how much money and calories can be saved by not imbibing. And more bars are putting an emphasis on house-made sodas and fresh juices that can be consumed without alcohol. Research from the University of Sussex found that participation in Dry January led to less drinking, even months later. This was even true for people who didn't last the whole month.

Enjoy socializing! It's important to take a break from screens and engage with more humans!

Sources:

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/dry-january>
<https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/Calculators/drink-size-calculator.aspx>
<https://www.reportlinker.com/p04877165/Global-Low-Alcohol-Beverages-Market.html>
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/broadcast/read/27612>

For more information, see www.healthyalcoholmarket.com

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