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HOLIDAY TIPS FOR ADULTS CELEBRATING RESPONSIBLY



The holidays are a time when family gatherings often involve alcohol. And since your children will be watching, it's good to think about modeling responsible drinking. We hear "drink responsibly" all the time but rarely get an explanation of what it means. Following is some advice for parents and other adults on how to model responsible use and attitudes about alcohol.

MAKE HOLIDAY GATHERINGS A SAFE PLACE FOR CHILDREN

- Offer plenty of nonalcoholic drinks, foods and activities.
- To lower the risk of alcohol poisoning, be sure to throw out partly empty alcoholic drinks. Children love to imitate adults and if they have access to leftover drinks, they may taste the contents.
- Make sure your children see you socializing without alcohol too.
- For your holiday meal, let your child help you prepare and serve traditional drinks without alcohol. You can make nonalcoholic cider, eggnog or punch.
- Don't ignore drunken behavior. Have a plan in place about what you and your family will do if you are at a party where there are people who have had too much to drink. Afterward, you can use this as an opportunity to talk with your kids about the effects of heavy drinking.
- Model responsible behavior by making sure that guests who have been drinking do not drive.

LET YOUR CHILD KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT

- Tell your child that adults may be drinking during the holidays but under no circumstances is he/she allowed to drink alcohol.
- If your older child is going to a holiday event, call ahead to make sure that the event will be alcohol and drug free. Check in with the party planners to see what measures are in place to keep alcohol out.
- Be prepared for your teen to ask you why it's OK for you to drink and not them.

MAKE SURE TO APPOINT A DESIGNATED DRIVER

- Discuss who will drive and explain to your children that the driver will refrain from or limit their drinking. "An important part of drinking responsibly in front of your children is modeling behavior that you want them to follow, so addressing drinking and driving is crucial," says Tom Hedrick, founding member of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

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