

Tips for Smart Drinking

How do I have a good time and minimize my harm?

The best way to minimize your harm related to alcohol use is not to drink at all. There are many things you can do other than drink to have a good time such as go to a sporting event, visit a museum or watch a movie. If this is not something you feel comfortable with, than there are ways to mitigate alcohol's negative affects. Many students have tried some of these strategies and say they have a better time at the event and actually have more energy the next day!

Tips for Smarter and healthier drinking

If you choose to drink, pace the rate of drinking by:

- Spacing the time between drinks
- Alternating alcoholic with non-alcoholic beverages
- Drinking slowly and avoid gulping
- Pacing your drinks by the hour

Moderate the effects of alcohol by:

- Eating before and while drinking
- Keeping track of how many drinks you are having
- Planning how much you are going to drink before stopping
- Avoiding drinking games
- Avoiding mixed drinks/ drinks containing hard liquor
- Making sure alcohol is not the focus of your social life. (Having a drink when you go out is different from going out drinking)

Optimize enjoyment & minimize harm by:

- Choosing not to drink
- Setting a limit based on BAC not to exceed .05
- Experimenting with drinking less and refusing drinks to keep your BAC down
- Deciding in advance how you will get home. Designate a sober driver, or have the phone number for a taxi service and carry plenty of cash
- Designating a sober "navigator" (when walking or taking public transportation)

- Being cautious of getting into sexual situations when you've been drinking. Alcohol intoxication sometimes leads people into sexual situations they would have avoided if they were sober. Excessive alcohol use has been shown to exacerbate problems with obtaining and interpreting sexual consent. (Finn, 1995)
 - Decisions to use condoms or other contraception can be influenced by alcohol intoxication. 41% of college students nationally reported they had engaged in sex after drinking alcohol without the use of condoms or other contraceptives they would normally use (CSAP, 1993; NIAAA Task Force Report, 2002)
 - Never leaving a drunk friend alone at a party or allowing that person to leave alone or with someone they do not know
 - Avoiding alcohol if you are on medication
 - Becoming familiar with drinking age laws and campus policies. For information on MA state laws and MIT's policies and procedures on alcohol, go to:
<http://web.mit.edu/alcohol>
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If you would like to talk further about these tips or other strategies please contact:

The Center for Health Promotion and Wellness @ MIT Medical
617.253.1316

or

The CDSA Center

Offers BASICS, a brief, two-meeting "self-check" for all students who may have questions about their drinking. This program is not counseling or treatment, nor is it a "just say no" program. The primary objective of BASICS is to decrease high-risk drinking behaviors and prevent consequences associated with alcohol abuse.

To participate, you can schedule an appointment by calling
617.253.3277

or by emailing:
cdsa@mit.edu
