

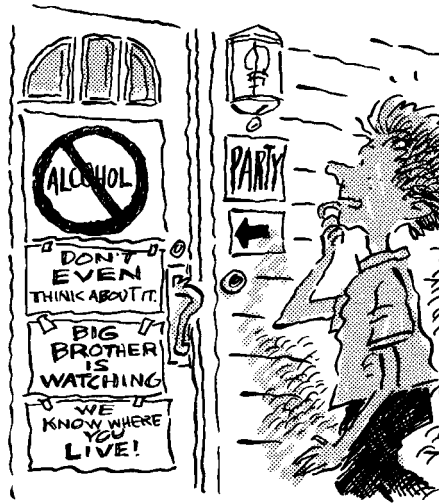
Drinking Problems

Her parents were so happy that Suzy had graduated from high school. Next was college, then a job, followed by marriage and children. The opportunities were endless. If there was ever a night worthy of a toast, this was it. And, of course, one toast led to another as the adults celebrated Suzy's bright future. Behind the scenes, Suzy and her friends sneaked in a couple toasts of their own. Later, while driving her friends home, Suzy, carried away by excitement and alcohol, took a turn too fast. The car flew off the road, killing two of her friends. Suzy's bright future was clouded forever.

All too often, alcohol plays a prominent role in our celebrations, and the results can be tragic. Here are some suggestions to help you keep a healthy perspective on your party attitude.

For Parents Of The Teen Party Host

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving offer these suggestions for an enjoyable teen party:
 - Set your ground rules with your teen before the party. Stress shared responsibility for hosting the party. Plan the party together.
 - Notify police when planning a large party. This will help police protect you, your guests and your neighbors.
 - Plan to be home, and conspicuous, during the entire party.
 - Select a location that allows comfort and adequate supervision.
 - Replenish the food trays and the drinks yourself. Your occasional presence will help keep a lid on unwanted activities such as drinking.
 - Discuss the legal drinking age for alcohol with your child, and be sure you both enforce the law.
 - Alert yourself to signs of alcohol or other drug abuse by teens.
 - Notify the parents of teens who arrive at the party drunk or under the influence of any other drug to ensure the teen's safe passage home.



- Limit the party attendance (no party crashers!) and set start and ending times. Call the police at the first signs of trouble.

For Parents Of Teens Attending

- Know where your teenager will be. Get the address and phone number of the party host.
- Tell your child you expect a phone call if the location is changed.
- Contact the parents of the party-giver to:
 - verify the occasion.
 - offer assistance.
 - explain your rules for your child, including a curfew and your stand against drinking.
 - make sure a parent will be present, and will actively supervise.
 - be sure alcohol or drugs will not be permitted.
- If you don't like the answers you're getting from the host, don't let your child go.
- Tell your child never to ride home with a person who has been drinking or taking drugs. About forty percent of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related. During holiday periods the percentages increase significantly, to around fifty percent.
- Know how your teen will get to and from the party. If necessary, provide the transportation yourself.
- Establish a time your teenager should be home and enforce it.

Adult Parties

If you are the host:

- Establish designated drivers in advance of the party.
- If underage people are coming, involve them in planning alternative activities. Supervise the activities.
- Avoid making alcohol beverage consumption the party's focus.
- Serve foods that are rich in proteins. Eating slows the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol.
- Don't serve salty foods that make people want to drink more.
- Measure mixed drinks with a shot glass to avoid over-pouring. Pour sensible (one ounce) drinks. Do not let guests pour their own.
- Stop serving alcohol to someone who is obviously intoxicated.
- At least 90 minutes before the end of the party, stop alcohol service and provide alcohol free beverages with food such as desserts.
- Arrange a ride for people who drank too much, or allow them to spend the night.

If you are attending:

- Eat before and while you're drinking alcohol. Food in your stomach slows alcohol absorption to a level the liver can better handle.
- Make your first drink a large glass of water, juice, or soda to quench your thirst. Never drink alcohol because you're thirsty. You'll drink too much, too fast.
- Stand away from the bar. Dance, mingle and talk to the guests.
- Space drinks to a maximum of one an hour. Alternate between alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks.
- Stop drinking alcohol 90 minutes before the party is over. There is no other way to sober up. Black coffee won't do it, and neither will a cold shower or other so-called "remedies." Only time will make you sober enough to drive safely.
- Be able and ready to say no if you've had enough or just choose not to drink alcohol. ■