

Have a Merry Christmas this year...For all the right reasons!

Practical Tips & Advice for Making the Most of the Festive Season

It's hard to believe but it is only a matter of weeks before Christmas is upon us again. The Christmas season can be a very busy one; last minute shopping, work Christmas party, visiting friends and relations and family coming to stay.

Whilst all these events can be very enjoyable, they can also be stressful and alcohol is often at the centre of these occasions at this time of year. The question is – how are you going to survive all these Christmas celebrations where alcohol is involved?

Drinking excessively can take a bit of a toll on your mental and physical health, especially if you are out night after night. Here are a few tips to take it easy, stay safe and make sure you're in still one piece by New Year's Day!

Remember you don't have to drink to have a good time and give yourself a few nights off too!

Happy Christmas!

Before you head out

- **Eat something.** The 'soakage' will help slow down the rate that alcohol reaches your body
- **Skip the 'pre – drinking':** it's much harder to keep track of your drinking since measures at home are usually larger and you are more likely to binge
- **Start later:** if you know it's going to be a long, late night, arrive at the last possible minute.
- **Get home safely:** pre-book your taxi or arrange for someone to collect you. Never ever drink and drive

When you are out

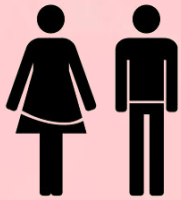
- **Keep it slow:** Don't down your drinks in one go
- **Drink water or a non- alcoholic drink** in between– this will give your body a bit of time to break down the alcohol that's already in your system
- **Don't get into rounds** if you can help it.
- Do not leave your drink **unattended** or accept a drink from a stranger



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Follow the low risk drinking guidelines

Up to 11
standard
drinks a week*



Up to 17
standard
drinks a week*

**Department of Health*

In Ireland a standard drink equals 10 grams of pure alcohol. Half pint of beer (284ml) **OR** mall glass of wine (100ml) **OR** One pub measure of spirits (35.5ml).



Don't forget home measures are often twice the size. Why not invest in a drinks measure?

Drinks should be spaced out over the week, not consumed in one sitting



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Be Aware of Drink Spiking

- Be aware of your tolerance to alcohol. If you feel odd, nauseous or unusually drunk after a couple of drinks when normally you'd feel fine, go somewhere you feel safe
- If you are with a friend you trust, tell them why you're worried. Get them to help you home and ask them to stay with you until the drug has worn off
- If you are alone or with a stranger, go to the pub landlord or manager and ask for their help. Wait in their office while they ring your partner, a friend or a taxi to take you home safely
- Don't let a stranger help you – they could be the person who spiked your drink
- Never ever leave a drink unattended. If you go to the toilet or out for a cigarette, take your drink with you or finish it off before you go. If for whatever reason you have left it unattended, do not drink it.

Many people like a drink or two at a party or in the pub, but remember, alcohol makes you more relaxed and could affect your judgement.

- Do not go home alone with someone you don't know
- Do not get into a car driven by someone who's had a drink
- Never walk home alone
- Do not go somewhere that is not familiar to you with a stranger
- If you're out with friends, stay with them or make sure they know where you are at all times
- It would be a good idea to have an emergency contact on your phone

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