



# Did You Know?

December 2019

**Holiday Spirits:** In today's culture, celebration and alcohol are often synonymous. The holiday season grants many a reason to celebrate, and more than ever, people tend to push their limits with alcohol in December. Consequences stemming from such behavior not only affect those participating in consumption, but also loved ones and those nearby. Even when consequences prove dangerous, some revelers still persist under the false guise of drinking myths.

## What You Should Know:

- Many believe that alcohol acts as a stimulant on the body. Happy, carefree and excited feelings associated with legal consumption of alcohol may mask the fact that alcohol is actually slowing down all the body processes. Lowered heart rate, delayed reaction time, slurred speech, decreased inhibitions and judgement, and slowed breathing are just some outcomes attributed to adult alcohol use.
- The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) reports that:
  - Mini-withdrawals can occur after consumption. When the buzz wears off, people can feel more restless and anxious than before they drank."
  - Alcohol's ability to aid sleep is a myth. Alcohol's presence can greatly disrupt a user's sleep resulting in intense fatigue the following day.
- Although there are many purported "hangover remedies," the only way to avoid the negative effects from drinking alcohol is to avoid consumption altogether. One hangover remedy to avoid is the use of over-the-counter pain relievers. Mixing in such chemicals can cause potentially dangerous reactions. **The only true way to alleviate any hangover symptoms is time.**
- Those using alcohol often report a sense of warmth and belief that alcohol "insulates them from the cold of winter." This is a myth because alcohol actually lowers a user's body temperature. Alcohol's presence expands blood vessels in the skin and creates a false sensation of warmth.

## What You Can Do:

- **Merry Mock Tails:** If you do choose to drink alcohol, be sure to also include nonalcoholic beverages throughout the night.
  - When consumed in tandem with alcohol, nonalcoholic beverages help keep the body hydrated. Introducing fluids into the body can help slow the rate of alcohol absorption.
  - Providing nonalcoholic beverages is inclusive of those who may be in recovery.
- **Festive Foods:** Eating plenty of food can also help slow absorption rates, as well as decrease alcohol's negative next day effects. Regardless of how you choose to celebrate, be mindful of your body's limits and if partaking in the consumption of alcohol, do so safely.
- **Twinkling Taxis:** Before celebrating, decide on driving arrangements to and from the festivities. Whether it's using Uber, Lyft, a cab, or having a designated driver, be sure that you have a sober plan to get home.
- **Seasonal Support:** Although many think of December as "the most wonderful time of the year," for some this season can be challenging. Those struggling sometimes use alcohol and other drugs as a means to cope. This is extremely dangerous as these substances heighten the symptoms of depression. If you or someone you know is using alcohol to self-medicate, please seek help or contact ECCPASA for more information and appropriate linkages.



Information obtained from: [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov); [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

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