



# Safe Driving Holiday Tips



## Don't Drink and Drive

The holiday season is one of the most fun and joyous season of the year. But, it can also be one of the most dangerous of the year. It is estimated that during Christmas and New Year's season, almost 95 million Americans will be on the road traveling to visit family and friends. In addition, people are more likely to drink and drive around New Year's Day than during any other major holiday of the year. It is estimated that almost half of all car accidents on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are due to drinking and driving.

Many people plan for New Year's Eve celebration and this often includes alcohol consumption. The more alcohol consumed, the slower the activity of the brain, heart and lungs. Before you celebrate, plan ahead. Have a designated driver, or at the least take a cab or Uber. Beware of drunk drivers and always wear your seatbelt.

## If you will be Drinking, Pace Yourself

A little known fact is that our bodies absorb alcohol faster than we metabolize it. The quicker we drink, the more time the toxins from the alcohol spend in our bodies, resulting in harsher hangovers. Drink no more than one drink an hour as our livers metabolize about one alcoholic beverage per hour. Also, remember that not all drinks are equal and one beer does not equal six shots (12 oz. beer = 4-5 oz. of wine = 1.5oz of hard liquor). When drinking, sip slowly. Order your drinks on-the-rocks as the melting ice dilutes the drink and ask for more club soda or tonic water in your drink than alcohol.

## Know what to mix, and what not to mix

Be sure to stick with the same drink all night. While mixing drinks does not cause greater intoxication, it can make you sick and cause you to have a greater hangover. Choose light liquors such vodka to lessen hangovers as dark liquors have a higher concentration of toxins, causing more severe hangovers. Mix dark liquors with noncarbonated fruit juice or water instead of soda. Do not mix diet drinks with alcohol as the lack of sugar and calories causes the alcohol to go directly to your bloodstream.

## **Alternate alcoholic drinks with water**

Alcohol is a diuretic so the more you drink, the more you urinate which can lead to dehydration. This causes hangover symptoms such as headaches and dizziness. Try to drink at least one large glass of water before and in between drinking alcoholic beverages. This will help keep you from getting too intoxicated.

## **Eat before you drink and snack while you drink**

Never drink on an empty stomach. Be sure to eat a full meal before drinking, and continue snacking while drinking. Eating while drinking will slow down the absorption of alcohol in the digestive system, giving the alcohol more time to metabolize in the body. Eat foods high in protein such as cheese, meat and nuts. Fatty carbs also work well but, they are not as healthy.

## **Myth: Coffee sobers you up**

While coffee may help wake you up, it will not sober you up. This is a MYTH. The only cure for being drunk is time. If you can't wait to sober up, get a ride from a sober driver or call a cab. Do not risk getting into an accident and hurting yourself, or someone else.

## **Be Prepared.**

- Use a designated driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; alcohol, over-the-counter or illegal drugs all cause impairment
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled
- Put that cell phone away; many distractions can occur while driving, but cell phones are the main culprit
- Properly maintain the vehicle and keep an emergency kit with you
- Be prepared for heavy traffic, and possible heavy snow (but probably not in Arkansas ☺)



**Remember, if you drive on UAMS business and get a DWI/DUI citation, you will lose UAMS driving privileges until the DWI/DUI citation drops off your record. Is it worth it?**

*Information for this article was obtained from the following sources:*

<http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2016/12/29/436807.htm>

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-david-samadi/new-years-eve-tips-for-a-safe-and-healthy-holiday\\_b\\_8891744.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-david-samadi/new-years-eve-tips-for-a-safe-and-healthy-holiday_b_8891744.html)