

Safe Celebrations



Tips and hints about ways to keep you and your guests safe during the holiday season.

NH DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NHBDAS
BUREAU OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES



Promoting Prevention and Recovery

NH Department of Health and Human Services
Division for Behavioral Health
Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services
dhhs.nh.gov/dcbcs/bdas/index.htm
drugfreenh.org

For statewide referrals and information, dial 211 or visit <http://nhtreatment.org>.

If you or someone you know is experiencing an addiction-related crisis, call the NH Statewide Addiction Crisis Line at: 1.844.711.HELP (4357).

Don't make alcohol the star of your holiday meal



Celebrate smart.

Holidays are a special time of year, where families, friends, and loved ones can relax and enjoy each other's company. But if you're hosting a holiday party, it's important to have a checklist and part of your preparation should be on ensuring the safety of your guests.

Perhaps your most important responsibility as host for a party or gathering where alcohol is involved is to take steps to ensure your guests' safety both during and after the celebration.

Drinking and driving is an all too familiar and tragic combination. More people are on the road, and they also are consuming alcohol as a part of their holiday celebrations. In New Hampshire there were 33 alcohol-related traffic fatalities in 2015. Those are 33 people who will never know another celebration, 33 sons or daughters lost because of a moment of **poor judgment**.

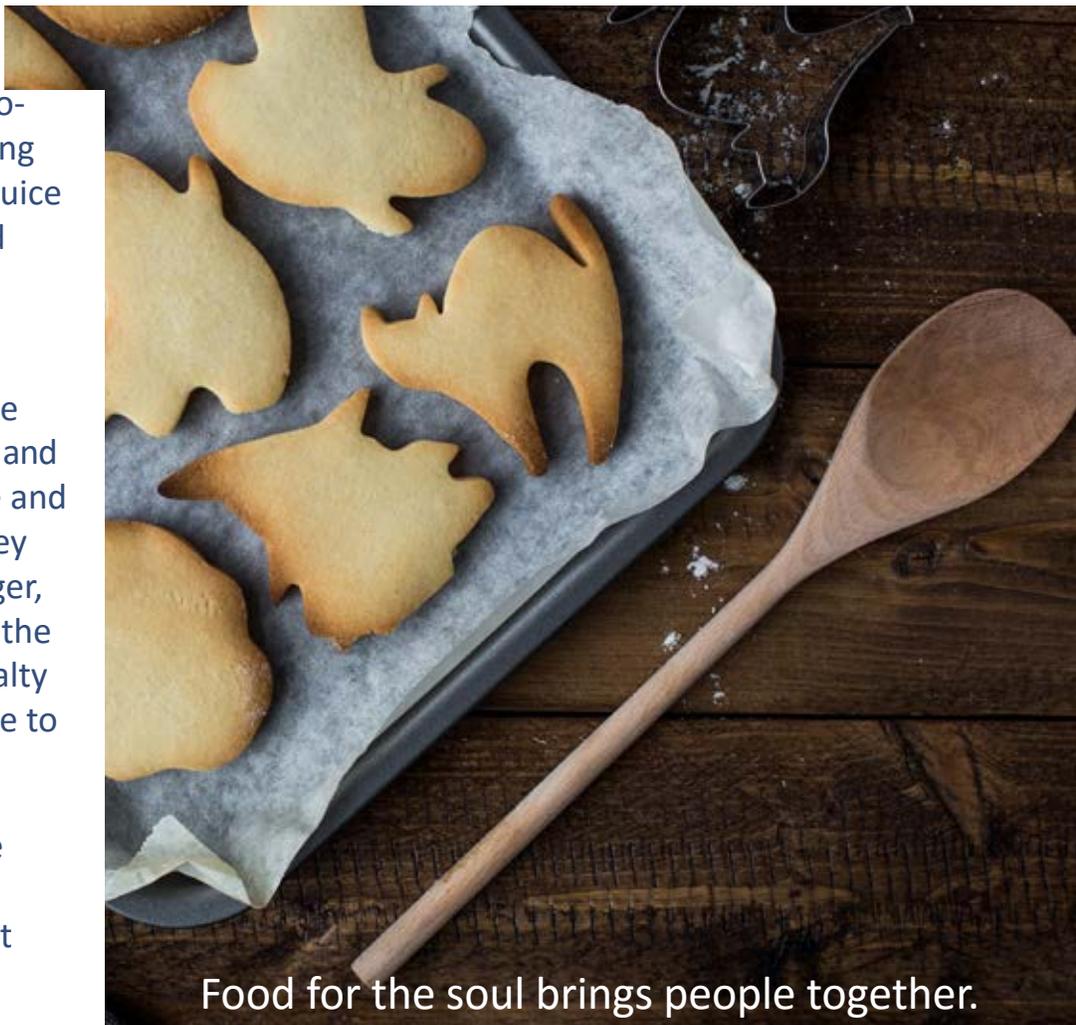
The last thing you want to worry about at the end of a long day of celebrating is learning that you've lost a loved one to a **tragic accident**.

Food and Drink

Offer a variety of nonalcoholic beverages including sparkling water, fancy juice drinks, soft drinks, and bottled drinking water.

Provide guests with nutritious and appealing foods to slow the effects of alcohol. High protein and carbohydrate foods like cheese and meats are especially good. They stay in the stomach much longer, which slows the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol. Avoid salty foods, which encourage people to drink more.

Mix responsibly! Measure the correct amount of liquor into drinks (no doubles!), and don't serve people who appear intoxicated.



Food for the soul brings people together.

Keep track of how much liquor has been consumed and by whom.

Avoid salty foods, which are known to encourage people to drink more. Serve high protein and carbohydrate foods, such as cheese and meats, which can help to slow the effects of alcohol.

Do's and Don'ts

DO SERVE

- Meats, which stay in the stomach much longer and slows the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol.
- High-fat and high-protein foods. Consider serving avocado dip and cheese and crackers.

DON'T SERVE

- Salty snacks that may dehydrate guests and lead to overdrinking.
- Liquor-based deserts and sweets. Sweets may trigger an urge to overindulge, and sweets containing alcohol make it harder to gauge how much alcohol people have consumed.
- Mostly greens, low-fat or fat-free foods. Low-fat and fat free foods are generally healthier, but foods with higher fat content take more time to leave the stomach and can slow the rate at which your body absorbs the alcohol.



Plan Ahead!

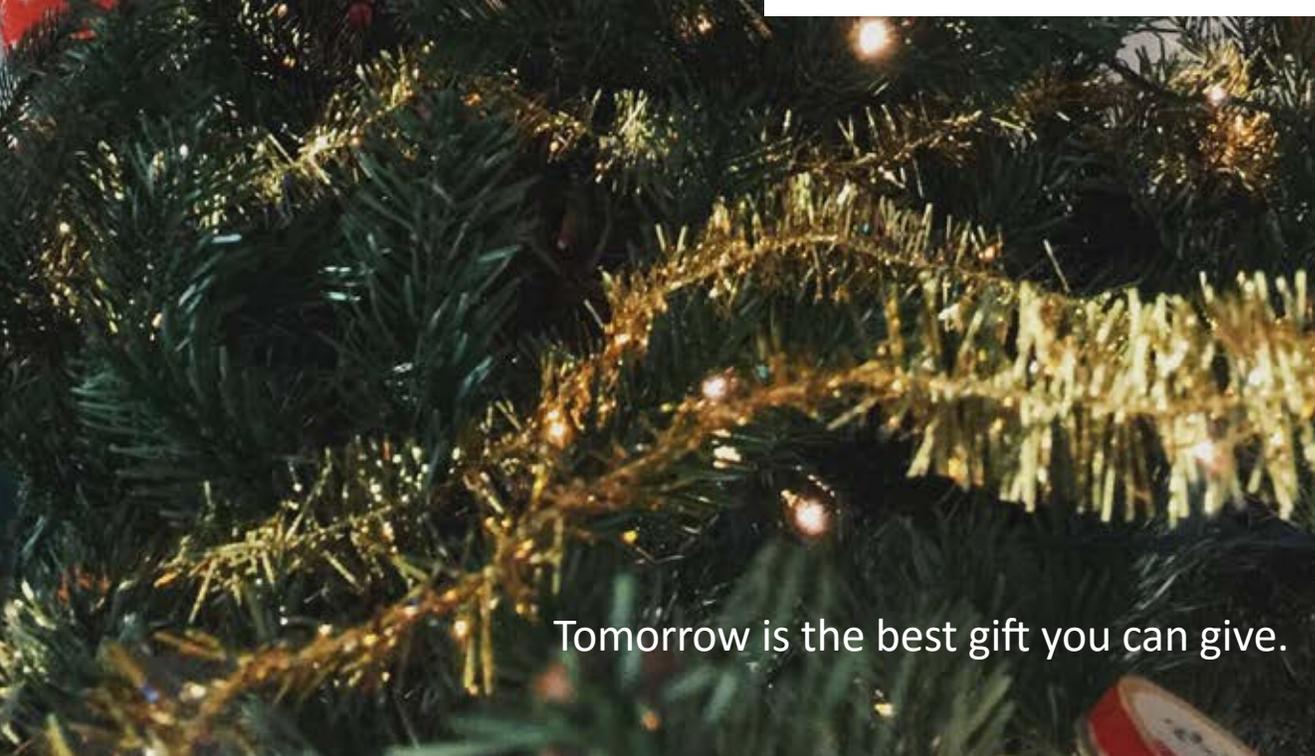
Avoid making alcohol the main focus of your get together. Entertain guests with music, dancing, games, food, and lively conversation. You're together to enjoy each other's company, not drink.

Establish ground rules and let your guests know that you're celebrating each other, not alcohol, before the party even begins. Let guests know that drugs are not permitted at your gathering. Many drugs have dangerous side effects if individuals are drinking.

Stop serving drinks at least one hour before the end of the event. This is the perfect time to have coffee and light deserts.

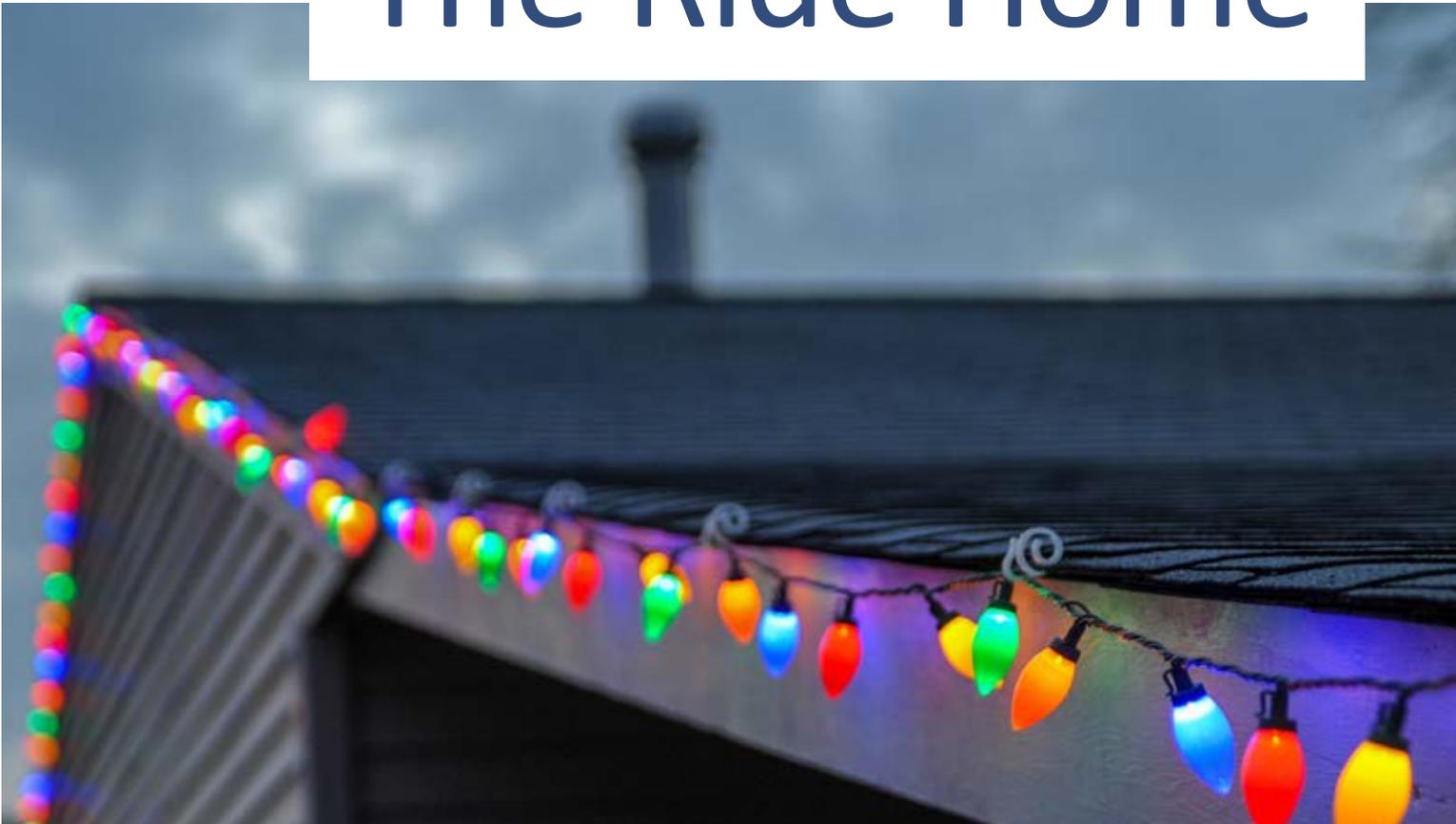
Be a good role model and don't overindulge yourself.

Create a backup plan and ask for help ahead of time. Recruit people who will not be drinking to help and ensure that everyone has a safe ride home.



Tomorrow is the best gift you can give.

The Ride Home



Be prepared to offer your guests alternate forms of transportation. Keep the phone numbers of several cab companies handy. Consider using an online company like Uber and Lyft and check out free apps like SaferRide ahead of time.

If you cannot get you guest home safely, invite him or her to stay the night. If the person insists on driving despite his or her obvious intoxication, take the keys, ask for help from other guests, or temporarily disable the car. If all else fails, say you will call the police (and do so).

It's your house.
You make the rules.

Did you know?

On average, it takes 2 to 3 hours for a single drink to leave the body. You cannot speed up the process so don't expect guests to "walking it off."

The Hard Talk

It's not an argument.



Sometimes you need to have the hard talk with your guest. Maybe she has become stubborn when you suggested a taxi ride or he is trying to push through you to get to his car. Things might feel out of control. Breathe. Here are some hints and suggestions that will help you de-escalate the situation.

- Try to get your guest alone. (People sometimes will react badly if they are inebriated and feel ganged up on.) Avoid embarrassing the person in a public way.

- Avoid language that might trigger a bad reaction like, “you’re drunk” and “you’re out of control.” Keep the conversation friendly, but firm.

- Keep your tone even. Remember, you are

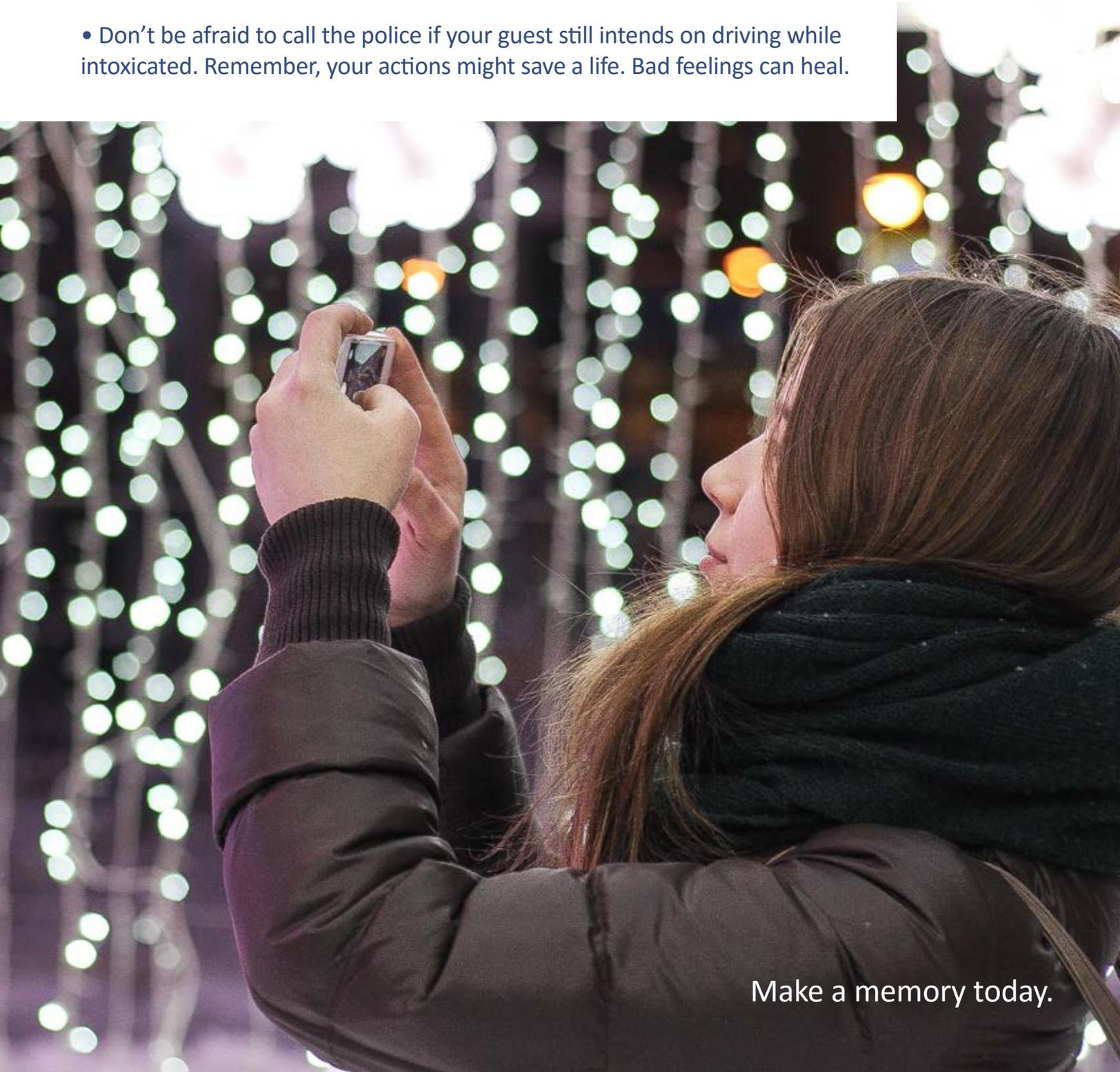
trying to help your guest. This isn’t a battle of wills. You are doing your guest a favor. Don’t argue.

- If your guest isn’t a friend, reach out to people who know him or her better. Create a safe space for them to talk.

- If possible, try to get to your guest’s keys first. Hide them if you need to – chances are your

guest will just believe he or she has misplaced them.

- Let your guest know that you have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure his or her safety. (In some cases you may be held responsible for what happens to your guests when he or she leaves your gathering.)
- Remind your guest that he or she will put others' lives in jeopardy if he or she drinks and drives.
- Don't be afraid to call the police if your guest still intends on driving while intoxicated. Remember, your actions might save a life. Bad feelings can heal.



Make a memory today.