

10 Tips on How to Stay Sober During Holidays



In a [survey conducted by Yahoo! Shine](#), American people have 5 most popular holidays commonly associated with drinking alcoholic beverages. The survey involved 2,000 participants who shared information on their drinking habits including favorite beverage and personal perspectives towards drinking. It also concluded that Americans almost always drink during New Year's Eve, Christmas, Independence Day/Fourth of July, St. Patrick's Day, and Thanksgiving. A detailed result of the survey was published on March 2011 or nearly 6 years ago. Newer study [published on JAMA Psychiatry](#) on August 2015 revealed that nearly one-third of adults in the U.S. have AUD (Alcohol Use Disorder) problem.

Even without those surveys, it is probably safe to say that Americans almost always enjoy drinking as a form of celebration during holidays. Although most people find nothing wrong with such behavior, we cannot say the same thing to those who already have AUD problem or currently are in recovery from alcohol addiction. Based on the first survey mentioned above, we are now approaching three more holidays before the turn of the year: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. While you may not always be able to avoid drinking alcoholic beverages at those times because of social pressure, you can at least prevent yourself from overindulging. Here are some tips to do that.

1. Plan Ahead

Everybody makes plans for holidays, and so should you. Most will also do some shopping for the holiday which may include home ornaments, foods, and alcoholic beverages. In case you are undergoing recovery from alcohol addiction, you need to omit anything that may induce the desire to drink.

2. Celebrate Privately

It does not mean that you must celebrate any holiday all by yourself. You have your own social inner circle filled with only close friends and relatives. Spend the holiday with people who understand and are supportive enough to help you go through the recovery process. Assuming you are in a recovery program with other people, it is easier to celebrate with those who have the same problems.

3. Reach Out

Feeling lonely can easily induce the desire to drink alcohol. If you are not yet in a recovery support group, seek out the right community for you. A good place to start looking is a doctor or GP (General Practitioner). The doctor should be able to provide legitimate contacts for you to call. This is a useful preventive measure to help you avoid severe AUD and depression from being isolated. Doctors can also determine the severity of AUD based on a number of [criteria](#) published by National Institute of Health.

4. Plan an Escape

Sometimes it is just impossible to stay away from alcoholic beverages, for examples when the party is held at the office where many of your co-workers drink. The best escape plan is to arrive alone, not with someone else who can prevent you from leaving anytime. As a rule of thumb, do not create any situation which makes leaving sooner than everyone else impossible or problematic.

5. Bring Someone to Back You Up

When arriving alone is not an option, bring a friend who knows and understands your problem. Your friend can always protect you from overindulging and provide an exit in the event drinking alcohol is too difficult to reject.

6. Have Non-alcoholic Drink in Your Hand All the Time

Carry a bottle or a glass of non-alcoholic drink in your hand all the time. If the glass is empty, ask for the same drink over and over again. Having a glass in your hand at all times makes it easier to reject any offer. If need be, choose to drink non-alcoholic beverage that looks like any of its alcoholic counterparts. A page on [wikiHow](#) offers some tricks to do that.

7. Know What You Eat

Alcohol does not always come in bottle or glass. According to a [Table of Nutrient Retention Factors](#) by USDA, many foods retain 100% of alcohol when it is used in preparation. Even a small amount of alcohol can lead to relapse, so be careful with what you eat. A chart of [Alcohol Cooking Substitutions](#) on New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services suggests many ingredients to substitute alcoholic ones.

8. Be Prepared for Cravings

It does not hurt to anticipate the possibility of craving for alcohol in the holiday party. Write down a list of simple activities to distract your mind from the situation for examples calling a friend, playing a game on your phone, walking outside to get fresh air, pet a cat or dog, and basically anything that worked for you in the past. The point is to make you think of something else other than drinking.

9. Remember That Recovery is Not Easy

Once you set your mind to avoid alcohol, you should not expect everything would be easy afterwards. There will be temptations and cravings every now and then. Knowing that the process is difficult should make you better prepared in any situation and learn to say NO anytime. If it is easy, anyone can do it; truth is you need to really commit to it.

10. One is Too Many

One drink is too many for you, but a thousand is not enough. When someone says “Just one shot”, you may need to explain yourself, which can be uncomfortable at times. It is difficult when you are celebrating holidays with your friends and families who are unaware of your problems. In any case, you can always tell the truth that you are trying to avoid alcohol as recommended by doctor, which is technically true.

Alcohol consumption does give potential health benefits, for examples lower risk of diabetes and heart diseases. Those benefits, however, only exist when you consume it with moderation. [Mayo Clinic](#) even provides general guidelines on how much alcohol beverage everyone (adults) should consume on daily basis to get the health benefits and avoid risk of addiction or other issues. Women of all ages and men older than 65 years can have only one drink a day, while men aged 65 or younger can have up to two drinks. One drink means:

- 12 fluid ounce of beer
- 5 fluid ounce of wine
- 1.5 fluid ounce of distilled liquor

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If you or a love one is in need of help, contact HUGS Recovery for a free consultation at 888 874 0593 or visit us on the web at www.hugsrecovery.org for a full list of services.