

Get the Good without the Bad – Control the Alcohol

Parties can be great for meeting and enjoying the amazing array of people in our campus community. Frankly, they can also be poorly planned, boring or a hot mess.

Whether you are the partythrower, partygoer or neighbor there are **positive** and **negative consequences** of drinking and parties: physical, social, emotional, legal, academic, financial, and material. They are felt at multiple levels - individual, group, organizational, neighborhood, and wider community.

Harm Reduction

Drinking and party-related harm can be **costly** – but over 95% of Cal **partygoers** minimize negative consequences by using at least one of these harm reduction techniques:

1. Know and stick to your limit
2. Choose low alcohol content drinks
3. Drink water
4. Eat before and/or during the party
5. Space and pace to one drink per hour
6. Stick to one kind of substance
7. Let friends know your plan and keep them in sight
8. Know who you're leaving the party with and don't leave alone

Most student drinkers (77%) have four or fewer when they party.

- 45% alternate non-alcoholic with alcoholic beverages
- 69% keep track of how many drinks they consume
- 35% pace drinks to one per hour
- 35% set a limit in advance

Student drinking behavior is influenced by personal/family characteristics, perception of campus drinking norms, and by specific party and situational factors, such as party size, location, duration and level of social control (Demers et al, 2002).

Safe Settings for Everyone at the Party

College student **partythrowers**:

- Express willingness and intention to learn and practice responsible party-hosting skills, however perceive problems (including binge drinking) as congruent with party norms and they as hosts they have little control over the negative consequences (Lin et al, 2014).
- Report significantly greater drink consumption and related negative consequences compared to their attendees when party location is off-campus (Buettner et al 2011).

True Stories

One day my friend Mary told me about her sister who is heading to college. Her sister was concerned because she does not want to get drunk. Mary told her sister that peer pressure is difficult to resist, but she always has the right to say no. Her sister still thought that she may eventually give in. So Mary shared another idea: grab yourself a cup with some sort of beverage other than alcohol. I've been thinking about this idea for a bit. Isn't that a perfect solution? After all, no one can really tell what you are drinking. So next time the peer pressure is a little too intense, pour yourself some non-alcoholic beverage in that party cup. I mean after all, you are "drinking," right?

I don't know about you, but the stress of studying, especially in midterm season, leaves me desiring a quiet night in on the weekends, as opposed to a ragin' time out. And even when I AM inclined to party on Piedmont, I want just a slight buzz to lighten my spirits for a few hours. Easier sometimes than others - but 100% possible. There are ways to have fun and loosen up by drinking mildly. Here a few general rules I try to abide by before I hit up frat row:

1. *Decide how much you're going to drink BEFORE leaving home, and stick to that amount. Go in with a firm resolve as to how much you want to be drinking that night, and simply politely decline any offers that exceed your pre-designated figure.*
2. *Eat protein and lots of it. Protein in your body slows down the absorption rate of alcohol into your bloodstream, so you'll avoid the sudden onslaught of drunkenness and instead achieve a more gradual buzz.*
3. *Try to have one drink an hour at a maximum. This prevents the alcohol from being metabolized by the liver all at once, so you won't feel suddenly inebriated.*
4. *Remember, the duration of time you're drunk is equal to the time required to sober up. And there's no way to speed up this process, because it's entirely based on the natural metabolism of the liver.*

- Underestimate the time and effort needed to plan a great party as well as their influence on the outcomes. For example, in the two weeks following the IFC ban on hard alcohol in common areas in fall 2014, UC Berkeley experienced 60% less alcohol related incidents.

Calls to Action:

- Be the kind of house that maximizes the social benefits and minimizes drama and problems related to alcohol.
- Know the alcohol and party-related policies.
- Be accountable for conduct and safety of your guests.
- Have sober security in strategic places to be eyes and ears.
- Provide plenty of water. Don't run out.
- Eliminate hard alcohol from common areas.
- Use sober and trained alcohol servers.
- Intervene with intoxication. Slow them down. Cut them off. Get them home. Call for medical assistance.

Respect the Drug

A standard drink is a) 1.25 oz of 80 proof liquor, b) 12 oz. beer, or c) 4 oz. wine.

Alcohol is a depressant, so it slows down your nervous system. It is quickly absorbed into the blood stream, then goes to every organ, including the brain, affecting the brain's ability to process information, so...:

- It takes longer to react to situations, such as a changing traffic signal
- You have trouble with judgment, such as deciding whether you should hook up with someone
- You're not as well coordinated

How much is too much?

- Alcohol is an unusual depressant. At first drinking makes you feel good. People who like the "buzz" from alcohol are probably enjoying these sensations.
- But, alcohol doesn't follow the rule "the more you drink the better you feel." After a certain point, more alcohol won't make you feel any better, and things start happening that you'd rather avoid.
- Drinking past a blood alcohol level of .06% almost always has negative consequences: feeling sick, getting clumsy, trouble with judgment.

Resources

- Toolkits for [Party Throwers](#), [Party Goers](#) and [Neighbors](#)
- [Emergency Warning Signs and Steps](#)
- [Alcohol Intoxication & Intervention Scale](#)
- [Understanding the Risks and Consequences](#)
- [Data Dashboard](#)
- [Alcohol Counseling and Services](#)

Contact partysafe@berkeley.edu or (510) 643-9073

True Stories

Shout out to Party Security: I was at a party at a coop and I wanted to publicly say that it was a fantastic party that was very well run. Although many things went into making the night a success I want to give a particular shout out to the security. They were watching possible entrances, checking IDs, blocking stairwells, and successfully keeping the party contained and awesome. Thanks y'all! Good security at a large party like that can really make the difference between people respecting the party and having a great time versus ending up with a destructive disaster. Staying professional, friendly, and alert is where it's at - I hope that more open house parties have people like you!

*After the Party: It was 1:30 am on a Sunday morning. My roommates were walking up and down Fraternity Row checking out what the Greek life had to offer them. It was time to go home but after 4 hours in their high-heels, they were reluctant to walk the one mile downhill to our apartment... in the dark. Scared of the consequences of walking around the south side of campus at night, they notified Bear Walk and had their **Night Safety Services** escort them safely home.*

In case of emergencies

- **911** for immediate emergencies
- Poison Control **(800) 222-1222**
- Berkeley Police Non-Emergency **(510) 981-5900**
- Berkeley Fire Department **(510) 981-3473**
- UCPD Non-Emergency **(510) 642-6750**
- BearWALK Night Safety Services **(510) 642-9255**