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## Sobering Thoughts about Drinking

Party animals turn into dangerous beasts when they get behind the wheel of an automobile. Drinking and driving causes countless tragedies every year – traffic accidents resulting in death and injury and suffering. Many of these accidents are caused by people who party it up with their friends and try to drive home. Party hosts and guests both must take responsibility for preventing these accidents.

### *Here are some ideas for party hosts to discourage drinking and driving during the holiday season and year-round:*

- ◆ Take charge of the party. Tell the guests you have house rules which include no one driving away while impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- ◆ Collect car keys from your guests as they arrive, and don't return them to drivers who might be impaired.
- ◆ Designate drivers at the beginning of the evening. These drivers will remain sober and drive the others home.
- ◆ Provide a choice of attractive non-alcoholic drinks for the designated drivers and for all guests.
- ◆ Also provide a variety of food high in protein and starch, to delay the absorption of alcohol. Limit the foods which are salty; they increase thirst.
- ◆ Plan activities to take the emphasis off drinking. Encourage guests to participate in games, entertainment, food preparation and other activities.
- ◆ Control your bar by serving guests yourself or hiring a bartender. Measure all drinks. Stop serving drinks early in the evening.
- ◆ Never serve a drink to a guest who appears intoxicated.
- ◆ Arrange rides with sober guests or call cabs for guests who appear intoxicated. Allow guests to sleep over if they have had too much to drink.
- ◆ Do not invite people who you know drink too much.

### *Here are some additional ideas for party guests to avoid drinking and driving:*

- ◆ Plan your transportation before you leave home for the party. If you are going to be drinking, make definite plans to ride with a sober friend or to take a cab.
- ◆ Eat a snack at home before you leave for a party so you won't overindulge in salty snacks which increase thirst.
- ◆ Alternate your alcoholic drinks with other beverages such as fruit or vegetable juice. Don't chug down alcoholic beverages just because you are thirsty – fill up on water instead.
- ◆ Stay sober and help volunteer to drive for others. Help your host to arrange transportation for other guests.
- ◆ Never ride with someone who has been drinking – even if you arrived with that person.
- ◆ Remember only time can reduce impairment. Hot coffee, cold showers and fresh air do not sober you up.

***Parties are bright spots in our lives during the December holidays and throughout the year. Make sure they remain bright memories, not darkened by a drinking and driving accident.***

