

Heading to a New Year's party? Here's how to stay safe

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(HealthDay)—New Year's Day is the worst day of the year for alcohol-

fueled car crashes, according to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

Every year drunk driving accidents claim nearly 10,000 lives in the United States, MADD reports. And holiday parties up the odds you'll be sharing the road with impaired drivers.

If you'll be celebrating the new year with friends, MADD offers these tips to ensure a safe start to 2016:

- Choose a designated driver. Identify one person who will stay sober and drive people home.
- Save the number of a local cab service in your cell phone before going out.
- Consider hiring a shuttle or limousine service to transport a group to and from the festivities.
- Make hotel reservations to avoid the need to drive home after a party.
- Organize party activities; games can engage people so they drink less.
- As guests respond to a party invitation, ask how they plan to get home safely.
- Provide plenty of food so guests are not drinking on an empty stomach. Limit salty snacks, however, so people don't drink more alcohol to quench their thirst.
- Offer nonalcoholic beverages, or "mocktails," especially for designated drivers.
- Prepare alcoholic punches with a noncarbonated base like juice, to slow absorption into the blood stream.
- If you're hosting, be prepared to let guests who've had too much to drink sleep over or have the number of a taxi company ready.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and

Alcoholism provides more on [holiday drinking safety](#).

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