



Monthly Tip

Festive Drinking

With the Spring Festival, Christmas and the New Year fast approaching, there will be plenty of celebrations with friends, families and workmates ahead. Celebrations often involve lavish indulgences in food, holidays and of course for many, alcohol.

Many people can relate to drinking 'one too many drinks' and cringing as they recall last night's '*I can't believe said/did that*'. For some the upcoming celebrations can bring fear, dread and higher levels of stress as we anticipate our loved one's frequently embarrassing or hurtful behaviours when the drinking in excess.

On festive occasions people enjoy drinking for its 'social lubricating' effects, helping people relax and connect with others. The drawbacks of drinking alcohol in excess, is that reduces inhibitions, impairs judgment and increases the likelihood of placing ourselves or others at harm or at risk.

So how do we look after ourselves and our loved ones in the months ahead?

1. Pre-arrange your travel to and from the celebrations by having a delegated driver who is prepared not to drink or book a taxi.
2. Eat before you go out to reduce the effects of drinking
3. Pace your drinking over the course of the night
4. Attend celebrations with people that you can trust to look out for you and your safety and vice versa
5. Remember when drinking that your actions may have a negative impact on those you care about and not just yourself.
6. Recognize that the consequences of '*I can't believe I said/did that*' behaviour may be detrimental to how others view you in the future, and your relationships with others.

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How do you know if you or someone you love has a drinking problem? The questions below highlight the complexity and impact of having a drinking problem.

- Have you ever lied to friends or family to cover up your use?
- Have you lost an important relationship because of your drinking?
- Have you ever felt badly because of something you said or did while under the influence?
- Do you feel that people do not trust you anymore?
- Do you have trouble concentrating, or notice that your memory isn't as good?
- Do you frequently feel guilty or bad after drinking?
- Has your ability to fulfil daily responsibilities (e.g. work, household duties, meeting commitments) been impaired by drinking behaviour?
- Have you dropped activities which were once important to you?
- Do you use alcohol to feel better, or even to feel normal?
- Have you driven a car while impaired?
- Have you ever thought about cutting down or quitting?

If you have answered yes to the majority of these questions, then this may indicate that you or your loved one has a drinking problem.

It is important to recognize that a person cannot be made to change their behaviour but as partner, friend or loved one you can support change through encouragement and being open and honest about the impact the drinking has had on yourself and others. For further professional help please contact us on 9378 8559.

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