

Australian Medical Association Limited

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START 2020 WITH A GOOD TIME AND A CLEAR HEAD – SET YOURSELF A LIMIT AND STICK TO IT

With millions of Australians preparing to see in the New Year tonight, the AMA has released its tips for having a good – and safe – time.

“New Year’s Eve is a time of celebration, with many Australians reflecting on the past year, and looking forward to 2020,” AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today.

“Whether it’s watching the fireworks, dancing the night away, relaxing in a camp chair by the beach, or enjoying a family dinner at home, many Australians will accompany their celebrations with a champagne, wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverage.

“While drinking alcohol is part of the holiday season for many people, it’s important to remember the potential harms of over-indulging, and make an effort to avoid dangerous levels of alcohol consumption.

“Unfortunately, the social acceptability of hazardous alcohol use over the summer months, particularly at New Year, puts our health workers and hospitals under increased pressure from alcohol-related presentations.

“Research from [VicHealth](#) indicates that there is a seven-fold increase in ambulance attendances and a six-fold increase in emergency presentations for acute intoxication on New Year’s Eve.

“It is not only the people who drink excessively who are at risk. Innocent bystanders can be injured or harmed when drug and alcohol-related conflicts escalate. Alcohol-related violence, including family and domestic violence incidents, increases significantly over the Christmas and New Year period.

“It’s important not to normalise heavy drinking, especially around younger family members. Young people are at a higher risk of developing harmful drinking patterns if they are exposed to alcohol at a young age. Try to plan activities for your family that don’t involve alcohol.

“This New Year’s Eve, reconsider your need to drink. If you choose to drink, there are some simple steps you can take to reduce the risk of harm.

“The AMA thanks in advance all the dedicated hospital and emergency services professionals who are forgoing their own celebrations tonight to look after people in need.”

AMA tips to avoid alcohol-related harm at New Year:

- Set a limit for how much alcohol you will have before you start drinking, and keep track of your drinks. The National Health and Medical Research Council’s new [draft guidelines](#) recommend no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion to reduce the risk of harm.
- Opt for low or mid-strength drinks rather than full-strength ones to avoid becoming intoxicated.
- If you are hosting a party, consider providing attractive non-alcoholic options like flavoured mineral water, non-alcoholic punch, or mocktails for those who choose not to drink.

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
 - Eat before, and while, you are drinking, and spread out alcoholic drinks by alternating them with non-alcoholic drinks. This will slow down the increase in blood alcohol concentration.
 - Do not provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years.
 - Do not drink alcohol if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.
 - 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) is the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service. If you are in danger, call 000.
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