



Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Plan of the Week Notes

Week 1

Make safe choices about drinking and driving during the holiday season to avoid negative outcomes. Holiday parties and family gatherings are events that many look forward to at the end of the year, but these environments may increase the risk for Sailors and Marines to engage in unhealthy alcohol behavior. You may think that having a few drinks to take the edge off isn't enough to cause you to make bad decisions behind the wheel. [But it only takes one time to hurt yourself, others, or your career.](#) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that alcohol-impaired drivers cause one death every 53 minutes.¹ In 2014, over 1.1 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.² You can be part of the solution.

- Make arrangements to have a non-drinking designated driver.
- Have a family member or friend pick you up.
- Call a taxi. Program the number into your phone so you have it readily available when needed.
- Plan to stay overnight.

Week 2

Check medications you take to see how they react with alcohol. Are you brewing a recipe for disaster without realizing it? Alcohol and medicines may create a harmful reaction even if they are not taken at the exact same time. When mixed with alcohol, over-the-counter cold medicine can intensify drowsiness and ibuprofen can create a rapid heartbeat in some people.³ Many medications have more than one ingredient that can react with alcohol, so know the facts about your medications and whether it is safe to consume alcohol while you take these medications. Check with your pharmacist or health care provider about mixing alcohol with medicines and consult the National Institutes of Health's guide on [Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicine.](#)



Week 3

Impaired driving can also occur when taking medications. Be sure you are aware of side effects and interactions of all over-the-counter and prescription medications by talking to your health care provider or pharmacist, especially before getting behind the wheel. Medications can have similar negative effects to alcohol such as impaired judgment, perception, and motor skills. Approximately 16% of motor vehicle crashes involve drugs (legal and illegal) other than alcohol.² Take a taxi or get a ride if needed.

Week 4

End your year on a high note by drinking responsibly. Planning ahead is key to making [safe and healthy decisions about drinking and driving](#) during the holiday season. Many people mistakenly think that you can calculate your blood alcohol concentration (BAC) based upon how many drinks you've consumed. BAC is actually based upon a number of factors including body weight, amount of food eaten, how fast you drink, and your gender.⁴ A BAC as low as .02% can create a loss of judgment and trouble multitasking, and a BAC of .05% impairs coordination, tracking moving objects visually, and steering a vehicle.⁴ Even drinking one or two drinks can have an effect on your ability to judge and react. If someone you know is drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel. If you plan on drinking, [decide how you will get home before you start drinking](#).

References

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Impaired Driving. http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/index.html. Updated 7 September 2016.
- 2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Impaired Driving: Get the Facts. http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Impaired_Driving/impaired-driv_factsheet.html. Updated 15 April 2016.
- 3 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Harmful Interactions. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Medicine/medicine.htm>. Published 2003. Revised 2014.
- 4 U.S. Department of Transportation. The ABCs of BAC: A Guide to Understanding Blood Alcohol Concentration and Alcohol Impairment. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/nti/pdf/809844-TheABCsOfBAC.pdf>. Revised July 2016.