

- Nationwide in 2003, there were 42,643 traffic fatalities. Of those, 17,013 were alcohol-related. That means 40% of all traffic deaths were alcohol-related. In other words there was an average of one alcohol-related fatality every 31 minutes. *(U.S. Department of Transportation)*
- In Nebraska, 41% of traffic fatalities in 2003 were alcohol-related, increasing from 34.8% in 1997. *(U.S. Department of Transportation)*

- Every weekday night between the hours of 10 p.m. and 1 a.m., one in every 13 drivers is drunk with a BAC of .08 or higher. On the weekends between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. that number increases to one in seven drivers. *(Miller et al., 1996b)*

Alcohol

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Responsible Choices About **Alcohol**

Alcohol

For many people, alcohol plays a role in different events and celebrations throughout the year. It is critically important that those men and women who chose to drink do so responsibly and with a full awareness of any factors that might put them at risk.

Alcohol is a depressant, which means that it slows the body's functions as it is absorbed into the bloodstream. Driving with a blood alcohol content at or even below the legal limit may put the driver and other motorists on the road at risk. The reaction time needed to avoid or prevent a crash may require only a split second, but that split second may be lost due to the depressant effects of alcohol.

As a host or hostess, it is your responsibility to take actions that will foster the responsible use of alcohol at any events you are planning. There are a number of easy steps you can take to reduce the risk of alcohol abuse.

- Always serve food with alcohol. High protein and carbohydrate foods, like cheese and meat are especially good. They stay in the stomach much longer, which slows the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol.
- Do not make drinking the highlight of the event. That makes it more difficult for those who have not chosen to drink to enjoy themselves.
- Have several jiggers or self-measuring one-ounce bottle spouts at the bar to mix drinks. Guests are less likely to drink excessively when standard measures are used.
- If you serve alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, such as a fruit juice. The body absorbs alcohol faster when mixed with carbonation.
- Do not force drinks on your guests or rush to refill their glasses when empty. Some guests may not wish to appear rude and will accept drinks they do not want.
- Serve non-alcoholic punch or other drinks so that guests who are serving as designated drivers or people recovering from an addiction have something fun to enjoy.
- Stop serving alcohol about two hours before the event is over. Guests then have time for their bodies to absorb the alcohol consumed. Serve coffee or other nonalcoholic beverages as well as food.
- If you have observed a person consuming too much alcohol, suggest that they spend the night, or call a cab and pay the fee to have them taken home. Their car can be picked up at a later time, and few people turn down a free ride.
- Whatever you do, do not allow an impaired person to drive, you owe that to them as a friend.

There are several groups of people for whom the safest choice is to not drink at all. These groups include:

- **women who are pregnant or trying to conceive.**
- **individuals who plan to drive or engage in other activities that require attention and skill.**
- **Individuals who cannot keep their drinking moderate.**
- **Children and adolescents under the age of 21.**
- **Individuals who have a parent, grandparent or sibling who has alcoholism.**
- **Individuals who are recovering from an alcohol or drug addiction.**

For additional information about the effects of alcohol or for recommendations on how to get help for someone who may be using alcohol, call the LCAD information and referral line. Staff are available to take your calls Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or visit us at

**www.lcad.org
(402) 475-2694**

One 12 oz. can of beer, one 4 oz. glass of wine, one 1 oz. shot of hard liquor and one wine cooler contain the same amount of pure alcohol, about 1/2 ounce. This is defined as one standard serving. It takes one hour for the average size person's liver to metabolize alcohol from one standard serving.