



## Having a Sober Holiday Season

Having a sober holiday season will make it joyful for all. There are many dos and don'ts that can help us have a happy, sober holiday. You can "Google" lists that contain valuable ideas to develop strategies and behaviors for having fun without risking recovery. Almost all of these lists are for sober adults.

If you ask your teens how they are feeling about facing the holiday season sober, they are likely to say this season is 'no big deal.' Teens typically don't express fear and/or anxiety to parents even when they are experiencing these feelings. Don't believe your advice isn't valued!

In order to help teens develop usable healthy strategies, parents and therapists will need to address these issues with them. In addition, as they get into their later teens (16 and older), caring adults are essential to guide them in establishing their own approaches to sobriety.

Understanding the problem always begins with the root belief:

**Holidays are a time where people celebrate with alcohol (and drugs).**

Some family holidays tend to include significant alcohol (or other drug) consumption. Children who grow up watching adults drink heavily tend to drink more, especially when they are close to those people. Having alcohol available to teens (not locked up or monitored) also increases the chances

that they will drink. Teen who are offered alcohol at home are more likely to drink heavily outside of the home. They are twice as likely to have consumed alcohol in the last month and more likely to have been drunk at school or driven while intoxicated. Families can alter alcohol-related traditions to support sober teens.

For some teens, it seems as though everyone they know (family and friends) drinks or uses to have fun. Adults may realize how naive it is for teens to believe this, yet for a teen who wants to do what friends are doing, using appears to be the norm.

**IN ORDER TO CHANGE A BELIEF YOU MUST START TO ATTACK THE UNDERLYING DISHONESTY IT IS BASED ON.**

Holiday parties may be fun, but most adults have been witness to that occasion where someone acted foolish, said something they regretted, or worse still was involved in an accident or an arrest. Accordingly, teens need to see there can be holiday cheer without using or drinking.

Meet to discuss ideas for a healthy, sober holiday season. In order to have the best chance to success, come prepared with some ideas and ask your teen to do the same. It helps if you come with some ideas to illustrate how you or people you know have enjoyed holidays without using or drinking.

## Make a Healthy Sober Holiday Season:



- Participate in [activities](#) with people who value you and your recovery
- As a family, volunteer at a shelter or for an organization that helps others
- Make your home a substance-free environment, and plan your activities without alcohol

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(or other drugs)

- When going out with others, have a plan to escape if others want to use
- If your child is in a 12 step program, explore what people are doing. You can suggest he or she invites a new recovery friend to Christmas or New Years
- Be mindful of sleep patterns and food decisions

These suggestions are only examples. They can help generate ideas to make the holidays meaningful.

If your holiday isn't what you hoped for and drugs or alcohol are a part of the problem, please call us. ASAP is here to [help](#).