

Being A Good Host



A successful party means more than just good food and lively music. Here are some ideas to help you and your guests enjoy the party from start to finish.

Planning the party

Being a good host means providing drinks for everyone, not just those who want alcohol. If you're serving punch, provide two choices—one with and one without alcohol and label them.

- If you're serving mixed drinks, have measures (jiggers) beside the bottles so that the bartenders or guests don't rely on guesswork.
- Make sure you serve food as it helps to slow down the absorption of alcohol into the body. High-protein snacks such as meat, nuts or cheese are especially good choices. Consider serving a meal instead of just

snack food. Plan other activities such as games and dancing. Don't let drinking become the only reason for a party.

- Planning ahead means anticipating what might go wrong as well as what will go right. A good idea might be to have a spare bed or sofa ready for a guest who drinks too much and can't drive home.

During the party

Avoid serving drinks too soon or too often. Don't push drinks on someone who would prefer not to have alcohol or would like to stop after a few drinks.

1. Watch the snack plates to make sure they stay well stocked.
2. Mixing your guest's drinks for them or providing a bartender will help you make sure that no one will overdo it on individual drinks.

3. Keep the dance music or games going. If guests are active, they tend to drink less.

As the party ends

- Decide in advance when you want the party to end. Stop serving when you want the party to end. Stop serving alcohol one hour before this scheduled time. Never offer guests "one for the road".
- Serve coffee and tea and a dessert at the end of the evening. Coffee won't help sober up someone who has gone beyond their limit, but it will give some extra time for other guests to metabolize the alcohol they have consumed.
- If someone has had too much to drink to drive safely, it's your responsibility to do something about it. Serving coffee is not the answer—this will only produce a wide-awake drunk. Find an alternate ride or take their keys and call a taxi. If these options aren't acceptable, show your guest to the spare bedroom or sofa.
- Entertaining is an art, but it is also a responsibility. Your duties as host extend to being aware of the alcohol consumption or your guests. In so doing, you will make sure that everyone has

a great time from beginning to end.

- **Note:** People who are shy in social situations often turn to alcohol to make themselves feel more comfortable and end up making themselves look worse.

One group working together to address the social issues that can lead people to drink and use drugs is the Strathcona County Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy committee. They are made up of individuals from Capital Health, RCMP, AADAC, social services organizations, community groups, and municipal departments. The committee is using a multi-pronged approach—from educating young people about the consequences of the decisions they will make, to providing support to families and individuals who are already experiencing the harmful effects of alcohol and drug abuse. The goal of the strategy is to identify issues and gaps in service and work to provide those services and ensure resources are available for youth, adults and seniors. The Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy committee continues to work on creating action steps to address new issues and needs.