# Your guide to cutting back on alcohol this holiday season

From office parties to family lunches, the holiday season is a busy and often exciting time.

Everyone should be able to enjoy end of year festivities without feeling pressure to drink alcohol, but alcohol companies relentlessly market their products as a pillar of summer gatherings.

That’s why our Health Programs team wants to share simple steps everyone can take, whether attending or hosting an event this season, to create an environment that doesn’t center around alcohol:

#### Provide alcohol-free alternatives

There is a wide range of products available with low or no alcohol in them. Whether you provide  refreshing sparkling water or a mocktail, it is really helpful to have delicious alcohol-free options on hand.

#### Prepare for the conversation

You shouldn’t need to justify why you aren’t drinking but it can feel challenging to be asked. So it can help to have a few prepared answers up your sleeve.

You could say: “No thanks, I’m not drinking” or “I’m cutting back at the moment”.

Or you could say you want to have a clear head, you’re on a health kick, want a good night’s sleep or that you have an early start the next day.

#### Check in with loved ones

Having open conversations about your decision to cut back or cut out alcohol during the holiday period can help you feel less alone – and you might even find friends and family are choosing to do the same.

If you are worried about the alcohol use of someone you love, there are strategies you can use to speak with and support them. Find out more here.

### If you do drink alcohol, there are ways you can reduce your risk of harm:

#### Set a goal

Before heading out, it can be helpful to set a limit on how many drinks you plan to have. Sharing your goal with a close friend or family member could help keep you accountable.

#### Know your standard drinks

Counting the number of standard drinks you consume can help you be more aware of the amount of alcohol you’re drinking.

The number of standard drinks in a serve of alcohol depends on the alcohol volume (strength) and the size of the serve. A standard drink contains 10 grams of pure alcohol.

One standard drink is contained in a small 100ml glass of red wine, a can or bottle (375ml) of mid-strength beer, or a shot or nip (30ml) of spirits.

Learn more about standard drinks [here](https://fare.org.au/resources/tips-and-tools/).

#### Know the National Alcohol Guidelines

The [Australian Alcohol Guidelines](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol) recommend, for healthy people who drink, to have no more than ten standard drinks in a week, and no more than four standard drinks on any one day, to reduce the risk of disease or injury.

Following the Guidelines keeps the risk of alcohol harm low – but it does not remove all risk.

Learn more about [the Guidelines](https://fare.org.au/resources/alcohol-effects/).

#### Seek support

If you have concerns, there are support services available online, via phone and face-to-face.

These include the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline on 1800 250 015, Family Drug Support on 1300 368 186 and Lifeline on13 11 14.

There are also a range of apps where you can find online support including the [Daybreak App](https://hellosundaymorning.org/daybreak-app/) from Hello Sunday Morning  and [Bush Tribe](https://www.soberinthecountry.org/bush-tribe/) from Sober in the Country.

Find more support services [here](https://fare.org.au/resources/support/).