



Health *capsule*



No. 24 | 2012

Safe Summer Socializing



Cottages, barbeques, pool parties and long weekends all seem to go hand-in-hand with cold beers, fine wine and frosty daiquiris. But those celebratory summer drinks, mixed with hot temperatures and seasonal activities, can be a dangerous combination.

Fortunately, there are a few simple precautions you can take so you can enjoy those precious months of summer socializing safely and responsibly. Before enjoying a few beverages, make sure you:

Stay hydrated.

Drinking in the sun speeds up the effects of alcohol, especially dehydration. This can lead to heat-related illnesses including heat stroke or exhaustion. Alcohol also impacts your judgement, which may prevent you from realizing it's time to get out of the sun or replace alcoholic beverages with water. To have fun in the sun, alternate alcoholic beverages with water and take regular shade breaks.

Keep it small.

There can be a lot of pressure at summer events to keep your glass full. Consider diluting your drinks by adding soda water or extra ice, request smaller portions or choose drinks with lower alcohol content. Or why not mix all the ingredients of your favourite drinks without the added alcohol.

Find a safe ride.

If you're attending a social event, nominate a designated driver. You don't want to be negotiating during the party, realize that no one is fit for driving or ever get behind the wheel after drinking. It's also always a great option to take a taxi, public transportation or walk. Whatever plan you choose, just make the decision before you go out to ensure a safe return home at the end of the event.

Dress the part.

If you're enjoying time outside it's important to protect yourself from the sun. Whether you're at the beach or on a patio choose lightweight, light-coloured clothing, wear a hat and sunglasses and use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. Remember: the dangerous effects of the sun are heightened when consuming alcohol.

Remain aware.

Alcohol and warm temperatures can lead you into some risky situations. If you're camping with friends or at a cottage you could find yourself around a smouldering campfire or swimming in the middle of the night. Just remember that alcohol affects your ability to react and these types of activities are extra dangerous when drinking is involved. The best way to avoid these potentially perilous scenarios is to limit your alcohol intake to one or two drinks so your good judgement stays intact.

(Source : www.shepellfgi.com)

Boating safety

Be safe on the water

Just like driving a car, operating a boat takes skill, knowledge and careful attention. Follow the proper safety precautions to make sure you and your family get full enjoyment out of being on the water. Here's a list of essentials:

Wear your lifejacket : Make sure you and any children with you wear properly sized lifejackets when on or near the water. There must be a Canadian-approved lifejacket of appropriate size for everyone on board a boat.

Monitor the weather : Before heading out, make sure you get the latest forecast for your area. You should also be aware of local factors (like topography) that may cause weather conditions to differ from the forecast. Make sure you're aware of local hazards, water levels and tides.

Share your sail plan with someone on shore : A sail plan includes your planned travel route and describes your boat. You should give this information to someone you trust before your departure, even if you will only be gone an hour or two.

Inspect your boat and safety equipment : Check your boat to make sure it's safe before leaving the dock. Ensure that all equipment is on board, in good working order and easy to reach. Carry a first aid kit, basic tools and spare parts.

Have a safety briefing : Show everyone on board where the safety equipment is located and how to use it. Also, make sure the communication equipment works and everyone can use it.

(Source : www.healthycanadians.gc.ca)

Hone your water survival skills

Do you know what to do if somebody falls overboard? Or how to survive in cold water? Visit this [Transport Canada website](#) for many important boating safety tips.