

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: NIAAA - Risky Drinking Can Put a Chill on Your Summer Fun

According to researchers at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), more drownings occur in July than in any other month. Many of these deaths involve alcohol. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 31% of all drownings involve blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels of 0.10% or higher.

Alcohol impairs judgment and increases risk-taking, a dangerous combination for swimmers. Even experienced swimmers may venture out farther than they should and not be able to make it back to shore, or they may not notice how chilled they're getting and develop hypothermia. Surfers could become overconfident and try to ride a wave beyond their abilities. Even around a pool, alcohol can have tragic consequences. Inebriated divers may collide with the diving board or dive where the water is too shallow.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, alcohol is a leading cause of boating accidents leading to injury, death, and property damage. A boat operator with a BAC of 0.08% or higher is 14 times more likely to be killed in a boating accident than an operator with no alcohol in their system. Reaching a 0.08% BAC would require about four drinks in 2 hours for an average-size woman (171 pounds) or five drinks in 2 hours for an average-size man (198 pounds). Individual factors such as drinking on an empty stomach may influence how quickly someone reaches a 0.08% BAC. Individuals who have had bariatric surgery may reach 0.08% with fewer drinks. It is important to note that the odds of a fatal crash begin to increase with the first drink.

In addition, according to the U.S. Coast Guard and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, alcohol can impair a boater's judgment, balance, vision, and reaction time. It can also increase fatigue and susceptibility to the effects of cold-water immersion. If problems arise, intoxicated boaters are ill-equipped to respond quickly and find solutions. For passengers, intoxication can lead to slips on deck, falls overboard, or accidents at the dock.

The summer holidays are some of the most dangerous times of the year to be on the road. When on vacation, drivers may be traveling an unfamiliar route or hauling a boat or camper, with the distraction of pets and children in the car. Adding alcohol to the mix puts the lives of the driver and everyone in the car, as well as other people on the road, at risk.

Some people may drink more while away on vacation, which could lead to unforeseen problems. Drinking more can lead to higher blood alcohol concentrations and risk for accidents and injuries, especially if the amount of alcohol in a beverage is greater than what someone is accustomed to at home. Alcohol can also worsen certain health conditions associated with travel, such as motion sickness and heat-related illness. Alcohol can even interact with medications specifically prescribed for travel.⁵

Be smart this summer—think before you drink. Avoiding beverages containing alcohol while piloting a boat, driving a car, exploring the wilderness, and swimming or surfing can also help keep you and your loved ones safe.

If you're serving alcohol at a summer gathering, be sure to:

- Provide a variety of healthy foods and snacks. Food can slow the absorption of alcohol and reduce the peak level of alcohol in the body by about one-third. Food can also minimize stomach irritation and gastrointestinal distress the following day.
- Offer various alcohol-free beverages—water, juices, sparkling sodas. Alcohol-free drinks help counteract the dehydrating effects of alcohol. Also, the other fluids may slow the rate of alcohol absorption into the body and reduce the peak alcohol concentration in the blood. They also provide your guests with alternatives to alcohol.
- Help your guests get home safely—use designated drivers, ride-hailing services, or taxis. Anyone getting behind the wheel of a car should not have ingested any alcohol.

And if you are a parent, understand the underage drinking laws—and set a good example.

Summer is typically a wonderful season for outdoor activities and spending additional time with family and friends. For some people, these activities include drinking beverages containing alcohol. This summer, take measures to protect your own health and that of your loved ones.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), as part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, supports and conducts biomedical and behavioral research on the causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of alcoholism and alcohol-related problems. For more information, please visit www.niaaa.nih.gov. For more information on preventing problems with alcohol this summer, and tips on cutting back, visit: RethinkingDrinking.niaaa.nih.gov

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one's health, safety and wellness. The Glen Cove Police Department has been a longstanding member of the Coalition and works diligently to monitor alcohol sales to minors and provide prevention education to youth and adults about Social Host Law and its consequences throughout the year. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit www.safeglencove.org.