

Reduce Your Risk

Small changes can make a big difference in reducing your chances of having alcohol-related problems. Here are some strategies you could try:

- **Keeping Track:** Keep track of how much you drink [1]. Find a way that works for you, such as keeping track using a cell phone app, making a mental note or having a friend help you. Make sure to take into account standard drink sizes as you keep track.
- **Make Your Own Drinks:** Always make and measure your own drinks [2] so you know how much is in them. Don't drink anything that you haven't measured yourself. If you aren't sure what is in something, ask the server or bartender about the recipe. Drinks made by others are also more likely to have something you do not want in them - like drugs. Beware of "house drinks" such as party juice. It is difficult to know how much alcohol is in these. While not exact, the markings on Solo cups [3] give an approximate measurement of standard drink sizes.
- **Setting Goals:** Decide how many days a week you want to drink and how many drinks you'll have on those days. Remember that the goal is to reduce your risk, but if you are underage, the only way to completely eliminate risk is by not drinking or being in possession of alcohol. Setting limits helps reduce the chances of having an alcohol use disorder and related health problems. It also helps to set limits for yourself [4] before you go out at night. Setting a limit and sticking to it can take the pressure off when you are offered "just one more?", and can prevent you from drinking more than you intended to.
- **Pacing and Spacing:** Timing is everything [5] when it comes to alcohol, so take it slow! Sip a drink rather than chugging, or alternate between non-alcoholic and alcohol beverages to help you space drinks out.
- **Including Food:** Never drink on an empty stomach! Eating before and during drinking [6] helps slow the absorption of alcohol into your system. Try eating a meal that includes carbohydrates AND protein!
- **Don't Drink:** Not everyone chooses to drink at parties. Feel free to fill your cup with straight soda or juice, or drink nothing at all. It's also okay to take a drink and not drink it, however if you are under 21 or in a public space, even holding an alcoholic drink increases your risk for getting a legal citation.

Source URL: <https://caps.unc.edu/self-help/alcohol-and-other-drugs/reduce-your-risk>

Links

[1] <http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/tipsForCuttingDownonDrinking.aspx#keepingtrack>

[2] <http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/tipsForCuttingDownonDrinking.aspx#counting>

[3] <https://caps.unc.edu/self-help/alcohol-and-other-drugs/whats-your-cup>

[4] <http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/tipsForCuttingDownonDrinking.aspx#settinggoals>

[5] <http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/tipsForCuttingDownonDrinking.aspx#pacing>

[6]

<http://collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/tipsForCuttingDownonDrinking.aspx#including>