

**You have decided not to drink.**

Now you need a plan for sticking to your decision.

You might be pressured to drink by others or you might be tempted for your own reasons.

These 5 steps can help you be happy and confident about your choice not to drink.

### 5 Steps to Not Drinking

1. Know your reasons.
2. Talk about it.
3. Avoid surprises.
4. Get support.
5. Stick with it.

*Any reason you have for not drinking is a good reason.*

## Know Your Reasons

**Knowing why you are choosing not to drink can help you respect your decision. Your reasons may include:**

**To not embarrass yourself.** When you are drinking it is easy to say or do things you are sorry for later. Things like getting sick, acting mean or having everyone talking about you after the party.

**To stay safe.** Drinking puts you at higher risk for car crashes, fights, unplanned pregnancy, date rape and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Not drinking means less risk of hurting yourself or others.

**To stay out of trouble.** Drinking is illegal for minors. You can lose your driver's license, get fined, or even spend time in jail.

**Because you do not want to.** Many people do not like the taste of alcohol or the way it makes them feel.

**Because you are at risk.** A family history of alcoholism puts you at higher risk of problems with drinking.

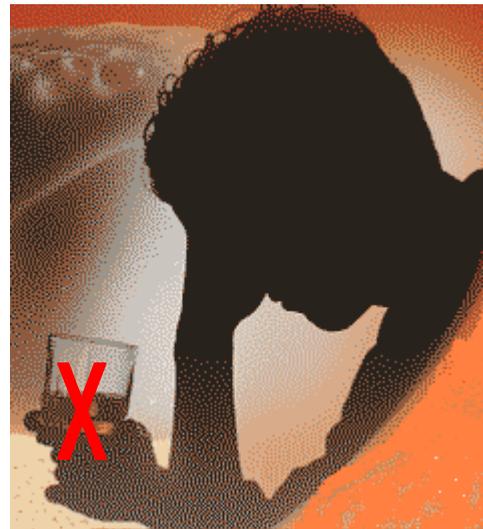
## Talk About It

**If people know you don't drink, they are less likely to ask you to.**

**Say a simple "No, thanks"** to offers to drink or go to drinking parties. Often this will be enough.

**Say no every time** you are asked. Friends who see that you are sure of your choice will usually stop pressuring you.

**Talk openly about your choice.** You could make it easier for others to decide not to drink.



## Avoid Surprises

**Don't be caught off guard by "party nerves."** Think ahead to make it easier to stick to your decision.

**Take your own beverage.** Bring water, soda or other nonalcoholic drinks. Bring extras for others to share.

**Have things to say.** Be ready to talk about things that interests you. This could be sports, movies, cars, computers or music.

**Help others relax.** Ease your own party nerves by helping others who seem shy. Ask them questions. Learn as much about them as you can.

**Plan ahead** if you'll be where people are drinking.

**Alcohol kills**



Refuse to ride with anyone who's been drinking. Always have another way to get home.

**Keep drinkers from driving** if you can. Get help if you need to keep others safe.

## Get Support

**Find friends who support and respect your decision. Find friends who choose not to drink.**

**Encourage each other!** Talk about any pressures you feel. Share your reasons for not drinking.

**Talk with someone you trust** to help you find solutions to problem situations.

**Join groups** that support staying sober.



## Using the Steps

**Knowing how to make a personal decision and stick with it will be helpful in other areas of your life.**

**Review your reasons** now and then. Remind yourself of the benefits you are getting from not drinking.

**Keep it light.** Most people probably will not notice that you do not drink

**Be ready to refuse casually** if people pressure you. Some things you might say:

-  "I'm watching calories"
-  "I'm in training"
-  "No thanks, I don't feel like drinking."

**Show others** that not drinking can be fun. Your alcohol-free good times may turn out to be catching.

## Using the Steps

**When you follow the 5 steps, it gets easier to not drink.**

-  You become more sure of your decision over time.
-  You get more experienced at avoiding or dealing with pressure.
-  Your friends respect your decision.
-  You respect yourself.



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