



STARTING TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

CELEBRATING A MARINE'S 21ST BIRTHDAY RESPONSIBLY



Approximately 21,000 Marines turn 21 every year. Going out with peers to celebrate is often a “rite of passage.” Educating young Marines on the benefits of making no-risk or low-risk choices related to alcohol use is critical. Below are tips you can use to speak to a Marine about the role alcohol will play in their 21st birthday celebration.

TIPS FOR MARINE LEADERS WHEN SPEAKING TO JUNIOR MARINES

Talk to Junior Marines about making good personal decisions that represent themselves, their families, and the Marines as well. Teach and model the Marine Corps' culture of leadership, personal action, and accountability.

EFFECTIVE TOPICS TO ADDRESS DURING THE CONVERSATION:

If your Marines are thinking about consuming alcohol, give them something else to think about.

- What is your responsibility when you're with Marines who are engaging in high-risk drinking?
- Have you thought about celebrating with activities that do not involve excessive drinking?
- How will you know if your drinking is out of control?

SOBERING FACTS

- Thirty percent of American adults don't consume alcohol at all.
- Of those who do drink, the average number of drinks per week is only three or four.
- Alcohol is the #1 cause of aggressive or reckless criminal behavior.
- Driving under the influence (DUI) is the most common alcohol-related crime in the United States.

HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES

Celebrating a 21st birthday is a milestone event that represents the transition to adulthood with more privileges and responsibilities. How can you celebrate a 21st birthday without excessive drinking?

- Plan gatherings that don't involve heavy drinking.
- Make sure there are always non-alcoholic beverages available.
- Attend a concert or sporting event where alcohol is not the focus.

Semper Fit, Single Marine Program, and local community organizations sponsor events that would support low-risk choices. Visit www.usmc-mccs.org to find information about local events.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

For more information, contact your installation's Substance Assessment and Counseling Center (SACC). Local program information, resource materials and SACC contact data are available on www.usmc-mccs.org.

TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER

The Marine Corps is a family. We always have each other's back and will step in if we see one of us making unwise drinking choices. Here are a few tips to help us celebrate safely from the start:

- Keep yourself safe and encourage others to join you in making safe, no-risk or low-risk choices as well.
- Share positive, alternative activities and ask them to participate. Ensure there are alcohol-free beverages available.
- If you think others need assistance, stay with them and help them find safe transportation back to where they live.
- Give them information about the Substance Assessment and Counseling Center (SACC) or other resources, if needed.

ALCOHOL BASICS

STANDARD DRINKS BY QUANTITY

BEER
ONE 12 OUNCE CAN/BOTTLE

WINE
ONE 4 OZ. GLASS

In other words, filling an 8oz. wine glass
actually counts as two drinks – not one!

LIQUOR
1.5 OZ. OF 80 PROOF

NON-DRINKER

Alcohol is an intoxicating addictive substance that has negative effects on the mind and body. Choosing not to drink also means choosing to avoid the negative consequences of alcohol misuse.

LOW-RISK DRINKER

Risk is related to quantity and frequency of consumption. Low-risk drinking means:

- No more than one standard drink an hour.
- No more than three on any day.
- No more than 14 in a week.

These levels are lower for women – no more than 2 per day total.

HEAVY DRINKER

Binge/heavy drinking is:

- A pattern of drinking that raises the blood alcohol concentration to legal impairment (.08% and above).
- When men consume 5+ drinks in about two hours.
- When women consume 4+ drinks in about two hours.