



## ODS+ENDS, April 2010

### Alcohol-Impaired Driving in Colorado, Part II of II

In February, the Denver Office of Drug Strategy brought you an edition of ODS+ENDS focusing on the prevalence and consequences of alcohol-impaired driving. As a follow-up to our February ODS+ENDS, this edition explores some of the ways to prevent others from driving under the influence of alcohol. With April designated as Alcohol Awareness Month, and with celebrations like spring break, prom, and graduation parties upon us, parents can use these tips to help ensure their family and friends stay safe.

#### *Recapping the Issue: Impaired Driving in Colorado*

- For the purposes of this ODS+ENDS, alcohol-impaired driving is defined as operating a vehicle after any consumption of alcohol. Even with a blood alcohol content (BAC) under the legal limit to drive, an individual may feel effects of alcohol and suffer from impaired judgment. Therefore, it is always safest to designate a sober driver to get home safely.
- Alcohol-impaired driving killed nearly 12,000 people in 2008 in the US. That's one person every 45 minutes.
- Colorado was one of only seven states to show an increase in the alcohol-impaired driving fatality rate from 2007 to 2008.
- A DUI/DWAI charge is expensive and impactful to the offender as well as friends, families, and employers.

### **TIPS FOR PREVENTING ALCOHOL-IMPAIRED DRIVING**

#### *1. Always Model Responsible Alcohol Use*

Your kids will watch what you do and listen to what you say more than you may think. In addition to always communicating to your kids that you do not want them to drink before they turn 21, think about what your alcohol use communicates to your kids.

- If you use alcohol, make sure you only drink in moderation and that you always designate a sober driver or another safe way home.
- If you do make a mistake with your alcohol use (for example, drinking too much at a party or being charged with a DUI/DWAI), you may be worried what messages your teen will take from the experience. Turn your mistake into a learning opportunity for your teen. Talk about what you put in jeopardy or lost, including your safety and the safety of others, and why you never want to see your child make the same mistake.

## ***2. Plan Safe Parties***

If you are planning a get-together for family, friends, or co-workers, take the necessary steps to help keep your guests safe.

- Never provide alcohol to those under 21. In addition to the negative consequences they may face, you, as the party host can also face legal charges for allowing underage consumption of alcohol at your party.
- Never leave alcohol unattended. Those under 21 will have much easier access to alcohol when the supply is not monitored. In addition, even those of age may over-pour liquor, wine, or beer if they are unfamiliar with standard drink sizes (12 oz. of beer, 5 oz. of wine, and 1.5 oz. of liquor all contain the same amount of alcohol). Consider designating someone as the bartender to help reduce the likelihood that your guests will drink too much and that underage guests will sneak alcohol.
- Never push your guests to drink alcohol. Also remember to provide lots of food and non-alcoholic drink options. Encourage guests to eat and alternate non-alcoholic beverages with alcoholic beverages if they are drinking.
- Ensure everyone has a safe ride home. Check in with people as they arrive to make sure they have planned for how they are getting home. You may also have the number of a taxi service on hand or other transportation lined up for those guests that have not planned a safe way home.
- For more party planning and hosting tips, check out MADD's Safe Party Guide at [www.madd.org/Drunk-Driving/Drunk-Driving/Safe-Party-Guide.aspx](http://www.madd.org/Drunk-Driving/Drunk-Driving/Safe-Party-Guide.aspx)

## ***3. Always Reinforce Safety***

There are multiple reasons people under 21 should not consume alcohol, and that all individuals should not overconsume, many related to personal and public safety. Reinforce this idea by helping your friends and family avoid situations in which they may be driving after drinking.

- Let them know safe options for getting home, including a sober family member or friend or taxi service.
- Consider purchasing the Home Safe Card ( [www.homesafecard.com](http://www.homesafecard.com) ), a prepaid debit card, accepted only for transportation services. For those who may not always have access to a free, sober ride home, this card may help ensure your loved one always has an option for safe transportation.

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**For more information on the dangers of alcohol-impaired driving and tips for keeping you, your friends, and your family safe, check out the following websites:**

[www.stopimpaireddriving.org](http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org)

[www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)

[www.friendsdrivesober.org](http://www.friendsdrivesober.org)

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