

The Lexington Group Employee Assistance Program

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Information and tips to help you live healthier and happier

No amount of alcohol safe for driving

In the United States, the blood-alcohol limit may be 0.08 percent, but no amount of alcohol seems to be safe for driving, according to a University of California, San Diego study. The study, published in the journal *Addiction*, finds that blood-alcohol levels well below the U.S. legal limit are associated with incapacitating injury and death.

“Accidents are 36.6 percent more severe even when alcohol was barely detectable in a driver’s blood,” said lead study author David Phillips. There are at least three reasons that help explain this finding, Phillips said. “Compared with sober drivers, buzzed drivers are more likely to speed, more likely to be improperly seat-belted and more likely to drive the striking vehicle, all of which are associated with greater severity.”

There also seems to be a strong “dose-response” relationship between all of the above factors, according to the study. The greater the blood-alcohol content, the greater the average speed of the driver and the greater the severity of the accident, for example.



Holiday safety: Don't drink and drive

In light of the fact that no amount of alcohol is safe for driving, if you plan to attend holiday parties, family gatherings or other social functions this holiday season where alcohol will be served, it is important to plan ahead and drink responsibly to stay safe and avoid injury. If you plan to drink this holiday season, follow the guidelines below to drink safely and responsibly:

- **Drink only if you want to.** Don't feel pressured into accepting a drink. Remember, it is always OK not to drink.
- **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.** Five ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1.5 ounces of liquor is the maximum that a 160-pound person should consume in an hour. A lighter person should drink less. If your drink vanishes before the hour is up, switch to a caffeine-free, non-alcoholic drink. Note: Personal tolerances vary, so it is up to you to know your safe limit and stick to it.
- **Never drink on an empty stomach.** Eat something before drinking, or drink with meals to keep the alcohol from being absorbed too quickly.
- **Designate a driver.** The safest choice when driving is to not drink at all. If you plan to drink, have a designated driver who agrees to not drink, and is responsible for driving you and others home.
- **Never drive after you've been drinking...even after one drink.** If you must drive, wait at least one hour before driving for each drink you've had. Note: Only time can sober you up. Contrary to popular belief, coffee or fresh air may make a person feel more awake, but these will not overcome the effects of alcohol.

Your EAP is here to help: If you or a dependent needs help with issues related to problem alcohol or drug use, you can contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. If you need help, call today. We're here to help you.

The Lexington Group EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caring and individualized help for personal and family concerns is only a phone call away.
For confidential services 24 hours every day, call us toll free at:

United States	1-800-676-HELP (4357)
Canada	1-800-567-4343
England	0-800-169-6706
Mexico	001-888-819-7162
Marshall Islands	1-800-676-4357
Puerto Rico	1-800-676-4357
TTY	1-800-955-8339