

## Healthy Abstaining: Everyone Doesn't Drink Sometimes

Choosing to drink alcohol or abstain is a personal choice. It is a choice that you might have to make over and over again each weekend. There are times when abstaining from alcohol use is the most appropriate decision for everyone to make. Whether one abstains for one weekend or forever, there are ways to do it.

Here are some tips:

- Abstain for positive reasons – do so out of care for self, a personal mission or because your lifestyle supports it.
- Be prepared for others not to understand and for you to have to explain your reasoning behind your choice to abstain.
- Have a repertoire of effective responses to subtle pressure, ridicule or questioning.
- Respect that not all others have made the choice to abstain. This means tolerating the choice made by someone who displays a healthy and low risk relationship with alcohol. This does not mean tolerating dangerous or excessive use or behavior by any drinker.
- Be careful not to abstain by substituting other substances for alcohol.

If you've made the decision to abstain, support your decision by:

- Socializing with friends who support your decision not to drink.
- Participating in activities where there is no alcohol or excessive drinking is not the expectation.
- Going to parties, but bringing your own beverage and/or container.
- Hosting activities or parties that drinking is not the main focus.
- Avoiding or minimizing contact with those that attempt to push drinking.
- Going to house parties with another abstainer.