



## Get the Facts: Alcohol and Driving

### In a Nutshell

About 30% of all traffic crash fatalities in the United States involve drunk drivers. In 2021, Minnesota reported 124 drunken driving traffic deaths – a quarter of the state’s fatalities that year.

### What role does alcohol play in traffic crashes?

In 2020, there were 11,654 people killed in these preventable crashes, up 19% from 2019. In fact, on average over the 10-year period from 2011-2020, about 10,500 people died every year in drunk-driving crashes (with BACs of .08 g/dL or higher).

### Alcohol MythBusters:

*Myth: Alcohol is a stimulant.*

**Fact:** It’s a depressant that acts like an anesthetic on the central nervous system to lower or depress brain activity.

*Myth: Drinking coffee sobers me up.*

**Fact:** Only time reverses impairment. Coffee cannot rid your system of alcohol. It just makes you a nervous, wide-awake drunk.

*Myth: I always stay away from the hard stuff.*

**Fact:** Alcohol is alcohol. A 12-ounce beer has as much alcohol as a 1.5 ounce shot of 80-proof whiskey or a 5-ounce glass of wine.

*Myth: I’m bigger so I can handle my liquor better.*

**Fact:** Size is only one factor in how alcohol affects you. Body chemistry, fatigue level, and the amount of food in your stomach all play a role in handling liquor. Just one drink can affect your reflexes and judgment.

*Myth: Once I roll down the car window, I’m okay. Or I’ll splash a little water on my face.*

**Fact:** There’s no fresh air cure. You gain nothing by rolling down a window or turning on the air conditioner. And splashing water may make you cleaner, but it won’t make you sober or a safe driver.

*Every day, about 32 people in the United States die in drunk-driving crashes — that’s one person every 45 minutes. These deaths were all preventable.*





**Myth:** *I just drive slower.*

**Fact:** Many mistakenly believe they can compensate for being impaired by creeping along at 22 mph. This can be very dangerous, and so can racing along at 75 mph. The truth is impaired drivers are unsafe at any speed.

**Myth:** *A drink or two makes me a better driver.*

**Fact:** Even one drink – that little “buzz” – can cloud your thinking, dim your vision and slow your reflexes. Small amounts of alcohol can impair your judgment and put you and others at risk of death or disabling injury.

### **Play it safe!**

- Designate a sober driver
- Offer non-alcoholic beverages at social events (*See recipes on next page*)
- Use them yourself and send impaired friends home in a ride-share service or taxi

**Source:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

## **Alcohol-Free Drink Recipes**

### ***Frozen Mockarita***

2 cups cold water  
1 cup lemon juice  
½ cup lime juice  
16-20 packets Equal  
16-24 ice cubes

Combine all ingredients in blender.  
Blend on high for 10 seconds or until slushy. If desired, salt rim of cocktail glass before filling.

### ***Touchdown Punch***

2 quarts water

### ***S.S.S. (Stay Sober Sangria)***

1 bottle Cabernet Sauvignon non-alcoholic wine  
¾ cup raspberries  
¾ cup sweetened strawberries  
1/3 cup pineapple juice  
1/3 cup apple juice  
½ banana  
1/3 cup orange juice  
1/3 cup cranberry juice  
black cherry soda

Blend and refrigerate until ready to make drinks. To make one drink, use





2 13-ounce packets unsweetened  
lemon-lime drink mix  
2 cups sugar  
46 ounces pineapple juice  
12 ounces frozen lemonade concentrate  
32 ounces ginger ale

Put 2 quarts water in a 1-gallon  
container. Add the drink mix and sugar.  
Stir until sugar is dissolved. Add  
pineapple juice and lemonade  
concentrate and stir well. Add ginger ale  
just before serving.

#### *Hail Mary Sipper*

¼ teaspoon beef bouillon granules  
¾ cup boiling water  
3 cups tomato juice  
¼ cup lime juice  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
¼ teaspoon celery salt  
¼ teaspoon dried basil  
4 celery ribs with leaves

Dissolve bouillon in boiling water. Add  
tomato juice, lime juice, Worcestershire  
sauce, celery salt and basil. Cover and  
chill. Serve with celery rib in each glass.

one cup of mix blended with one scoop  
of ice. Top off with black cherry soda.

#### *Kentucky Derby*

4-5 fresh mint sprigs  
1 ½ cups sugar  
2 cups cold water  
¾ cup lemon juice  
1 ½ quarts ginger ale

Rinse mint and discard stems. Place  
sugar, water and lemon juice in a  
medium-sized bowl, mix, stir in the mint  
leaves and allow to stand for 30  
minutes. Fill a large pitcher with ice  
cubes and strain liquid over ice. Add  
ginger ale and lemon slices and serve in  
tall glasses garnished with lemon slices.

