

# LET'S CHAT!



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## Oh What Fun It Is To Ride...Safely!

Every year, hundreds of people are killed and tens of thousands are injured in impaired driving crashes affecting not only those in the crashes, but all their family and friends as well.

While we can put a number on the financial and social costs of impaired driving, it is impossible to quantify the loss and grief caused by this violent crime.

For those who have lost loved ones, or those who have suffered injury, life will never be the same.

Impaired driving includes driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, including cannabis.

The best way to avoid driving impaired OR getting into a car with someone who is impaired is to plan ahead. Planning for a safe ride home might mean having a designated driver (someone who will stay sober) asking a friend or family member to pick you up, getting a taxi, uber, or paying someone you know to give you a ride home, or maybe staying the night at the gathering. Of course, the best and safest plan always is to abstain from drinking or using at all.

### Here are some tips for proper planning to avoid driving while impaired!

1. Always pre plan.
2. Always plan a way to and from an event.
3. Always think about how your plan might fail.
4. Always have at least one back up plan.
5. Always take steps to develop your plan.
6. Always evaluate your plan.



**IF I DRINK, I DO NOT DRIVE. IF I DRIVE, I DO NOT DRINK.**

**IF I USE, I DO NOT DRIVE. IF I DRIVE, I DO NOT USE.**

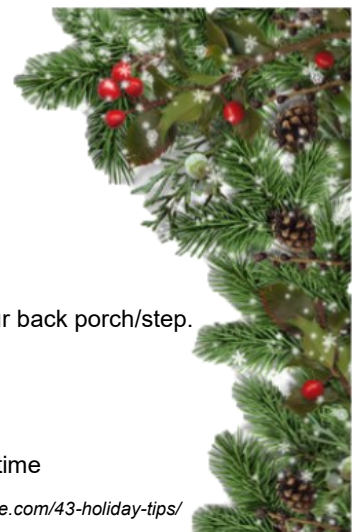
*Compiled from MADD Canada and AFM*

*Substance use is not legal for minors to use and this information is being shared not to encourage use, but to encourage harm reduction and safer use. The way to stay safest is to not use at all.*

## Sleigh the Holidays!

### 10 Tips to help you sleigh through the season!

1. Wrap presents in comics. Kids and adults will love the unique and creative wrapping!
2. Upcycle old Christmas cards and use them as gift tags.
3. Practice mindfulness. Stretch, read a book, journal or just practice breathing.
4. Give experiences instead of gifts. Memories last a lifetime!
5. Say no. The holidays are brief, don't ruin them for yourself by over committing.
6. Let it go. Your house is a home, not a museum. Don't kill yourself trying to keep it spotless.
7. Canadians have the biggest refrigerator of all. If you run out of space inside, use a cooler on your back porch/step.
8. Set up a Christmas fund in January to take the sting out of holiday spending next year.
9. Tis better to give than to receive. Help fill a Christmas hamper for a family in need.
10. Get outside. Winter can drive Canadians indoors and it can have a depressing effect. Schedule time to get some fresh air.



*Adapted from: <https://www.lifeinpleasantville.com/43-holiday-tips/>*

## Wishing You Happy Holidays, and a Wonderful New Year!



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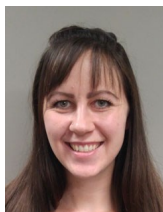
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# Energy Drinks - Be In The Know!

Although caffeinated energy drinks are widely available and popular among Canadian children and youth, they can pose serious health risks. Here is more information on what they are, and their side effects.

## What are energy drinks?

Energy drinks are beverages that claim to boost energy, make you feel less tired and improve concentration. They usually contain ingredients like caffeine, sugar, taurine (an amino acid), herbs and vitamins.

## Can energy drinks cause side effects?

Yes! Children and teens are more at risk of side effects than adults because they tend to weigh less. This means they're exposed to more active ingredients - like caffeine - which can cause:

- Fast heartbeat
- High blood pressure
- Anxiety
- Impulsive behavior
- Headaches
- Vomiting
- Irritability
- Difficulty sleeping
- Diarrhea

Children with certain physical or mental health conditions may be at higher risk of side effects from energy drinks. Caffeine can also affect how some medications work.

## My teenager uses energy drinks. How can I keep them safe?

One of the dangers of using energy drinks is when they are mixed with alcohol. Some people think that taking energy drinks can counteract the effects of alcohol, and keep you awake and alert. People who do this tend to drink even more alcohol, which leads to risky behaviors that can cause them harm. Educate yourself and your teen about energy drinks with these messages:

- Mixing energy drinks with alcohol can be dangerous.
- Even taken alone, energy drinks can have serious side effects.
- Taking energy drinks on an empty stomach can make side effects worse.
- Energy drinks are not a meal replacement.

Remember, energy drinks should never be used instead of water to rehydrate. When it comes to staying hydrated, water is still the best choice!



Adapted from: <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy-living/energy-drinks-and-sports-drinks>

## How To Reach Out During the Holidays

During the holidays, you may be trying to adjust to a new daily routine. You may also be spending different amounts of time with friends and family. For some, having a different routine can be stressful and isolating. You may also be coping with other people's expectations of how you should act this time of year. For example, you may feel like you're bringing others down if you're not "happy" or enjoying the festivities. This can make the holiday season a challenging time of year for some people.

**If you're struggling, it's always important to get support. Here are some things to keep in mind about reaching out:**

- **You can get help:** no matter what you're struggling with, remember that help is **always** available. You're not alone, even during the holidays. Many 24/7/365 support services are open including shelters, helplines and other community agencies.
- **It's OK to reach out:** the holidays are a happy time of year for some people. However, not everyone enjoys the season. That's OK — whatever you're thinking and feeling is valid. No problem is too big or too small to talk about.
- **Breathing can help:** if you're upset, try taking slow, deep breaths to help your mind and body relax. Calming your breathing can help you communicate more clearly.
- **Letting it out is good:** it's OK to cry, even while you're reaching out for help. Getting your feelings out can be a big relief.
- **Relaxing is key:** before or after reaching out, you can try different techniques to relax. Try a Tension Release Exercise on [mindshift.ca](http://mindshift.ca) or [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca) that can help you calm down and manage anxiety.

**Here are some steps you can take to ask for help and get support during the holidays:**

- **Take a step back:** try to remove yourself from the situation that's upsetting you right now. Find a quiet spot (e.g. your bedroom), listen to soothing music or going for a walk may also help.
- **Find a quiet place:** when you're ready to reach out, find a quiet, private place to talk to someone. Try to find a place without too many other people where you won't be interrupted or overheard.
- **Find the right support:** you can find support services that are available in person, on the phone or online during the holidays.
- **Contact a safe adult:** it's important to talk to someone you trust who's available during the holidays. You can try talking to a family member, friend, counsellor or any other safe adult in your life.
- **Contact emergency services:** if you're in immediate danger, it's important to contact 911 or the emergency services in your area for help.

Adapted from: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/how-reach-out-during-holidays/>

## Recipe - Christmas Truffles

**Christmas truffles are not only adorable, but so good!  
With sprinkles inside and out this treat can't get any more festive!**

Servings: 24 Truffles



### Ingredients

- 1 box white cake mix
- ¼ cup butter melted
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon Christmas sprinkles + more for decoration
- ½ cup white chocolate chips or (can substitute with 3 cups icing sugar and water to mix)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread the dry cake mix onto two cookies sheets and bake for 10 minutes (to destroy unwanted flour bacteria). While it is cooling, assemble other ingredients.
2. In a large bowl whisk cake mix with melted butter, vanilla, milk and sprinkles. The mixture should be moist and be able to hold its shape easily when formed. Add extra milk if too dry.
3. Using a small scoop, form mixture into even balls and refrigerate 20 - 30 minutes.
4. In the meantime, melt chocolate in a double boiler or slowly in the microwave, or mix icing sugar with a little water until the mixture is thick enough to cover a truffle. Using a fork, drop one of the cake batter truffles into the chocolate or icing mixture and roll around to coat. Tap off excess and gently transfer to a cookie sheet lined with wax paper. Top with more sprinkles, if desired.

Adapted from: <https://laurenslatest.com>