

How to Thrive During the Holiday Season

Harm Reduction Holiday Tips

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

<https://www.creehealth.org/health-tips/harm-reduction-holiday-tips#:~:text=Plan%20ahead:%20Make%20sure%20you,influence%20of%20alcohol%20or%20drugs.>

The holiday season can be a time of celebration and stress. There is a rise of alcohol and drug consumption during the period. This happens for different reasons:

- Sometimes alcohol and/or drugs are used when gathering to celebrate with family and friends.
- People also use substances as a coping mechanism to escape or numb the hardships they experience at this time of the year. For many people, the holidays are a difficult time, because of financial stressors, grief, trauma, or other personal issues.

Harm Reduction is an approach that focuses on reducing and minimizing the impact of consuming drugs and/or alcohol.

Plan ahead if you or someone close to you decides to consume substances. Planning ahead can keep you, your family and friends safe during holiday gatherings.

HARM REDUCTION HOLIDAY TIPS

If you choose to drink or do drugs, here are things to consider before taking these substances:

- **Plan ahead:** Make sure you have a way to get home safely. Or, stay at a friend's or family members' home.
- **Have a designated driver** when you are drinking or doing drugs. If you're a parent, pick up your teen if they call for a ride home.
- **Do not drive any motorized vehicle** (skidoos, cars, four-wheelers, etc.)
- **If you're going to consume drugs, do not use alone.** Surround yourself with people you know and trust. Tell someone about what you are going to do. Make sure they know where to call for help in your community if something happens to you.
- **Avoid mixing substances.** Mixing drugs can be deadly. Mixing alcohol, legal drugs, prescription medicine and/or street drugs can be a lethal cocktail. It can be hard to predict how your body will respond when more than one substance is used.
- **Start slow and low.** Take a little amount at a time. Wait a while for the effects to kick in before you take more of the substance.
- **Alternate your drinks** (alcohol and water).
- **Eat and drink water** before consuming. **Don't consume on an empty stomach.**

YOU ARE NOT ALONE – WHERE TO GET HELP

<https://www.capecod.gov/my-choice-matters/find-help/#virtual-recovery-support>