

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

78% of UA students had either one or no sexual partners during the past school year. (2009 Health & Wellness Survey, N=1,720)



How can you prevent yourself from doing sexual things when you are drinking? In other words, preventing the urge to do things even though you know it's not safe.

A. Realizing that things may not be working out the way you want is a good first step. For most individuals who drink, the difference between a fun night out with friends and a night of regrets comes down to one thing – dosage. Light or moderate drinkers tend to enjoy more of the benefits of alcohol (social, fun, relaxing) and less of the things most of us try to avoid (regrets, blackouts, hangovers). Even more seriously, heavy drinking is associated with higher rates of unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and sexual assault.

In weighing your own experiences with alcohol, you may decide – like the 30% of UA students who abstain from alcohol – that drinking has more costs than benefits. If you do choose to drink, however, there are several basic strategies to help you manage your alcohol use:

1. If you drink, have a plan. Set a limit on how many drinks you will have, count until you get there, then stop. Drink on a full stomach, know the alcohol content of your drink and have a sober designated driver.

2. Stick with friends you know and trust. If you feel uncomfortable in a particular setting, let your friends know you want to leave. Trust your instincts. If you see something that doesn't look right, speak up and step up to help someone in need.

3. Get consent and practice safer sex. Mixing sex and alcohol can be risky, especially if you are not in a consensual, mutually monogamous relationship. If someone is incapable of giving consent due to drug or alcohol use, forced sexual acts are considered sexual assault, punishable under Arizona state law.

In summary, remember to control the things you can and take ownership of your actions: where you drink, who you drink with and how much you drink. All of these factors are entirely up to you. To talk to someone about your concerns, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 621-3334 or go to www.health.arizona.edu for more information.



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES and David Salafsky, MPH, health educators at The University of Arizona Campus Health Service.