

## Guidelines for surviving a night out with team mates

Enjoying a drink is often a part of relaxing with friends or celebrating a special event or victory. The following is a list of practical suggestions that will assist athletes in managing their alcohol intake when out with friends and team mates. Importantly, athletes need to control their own intake, rather than the team environment dictating their alcohol intake. Athletes should:

- Plan in advance — Think about where you are going, who you will be with and how much you are going to drink. Plan ahead. What do you need to do the next day?
- Eat before or while you are drinking — Eating carbohydrate-rich foods following exercise helps replenish muscle fuel stores. Furthermore, food in the stomach slows down the rate at which alcohol can be absorbed into the blood stream. Eating slows down your drinking pace and fills you up.
- Pace yourself — Space alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic drinks. You could even start with a water, juice or soft drink. You will drink much faster if you are thirsty, so having a non-alcoholic drink to quench your thirst before you start drinking alcohol is a good idea, particularly after playing sport.
- Drink slowly — Sip your drink, do not down it in gulps. Put your glass down between sips.
- Select low-alcoholic drinks — Low-alcoholic beers or spirits in large glasses of juice or soft drink.
- Be the designated driver — If you have made the decision not to drink and are worried that there might be pressure from your friends or team mates to have a few, let them know that you are the designated driver. They will respect that decision and it will save them money in cab fares.
- Drink one drink at a time — Do not let people top up your drink if you have not finished it — it is a lot harder to keep track of how much you have drunk.
- Keep yourself busy — If you are occupied you tend to drink less. Have a dance or play pool, do not just sit and drink.
- Avoid rounds or 'shouts' — Drinking in a 'shout' with team mates encourages you to drink at someone else's pace. If you do get stuck in this situation, buy a non-alcoholic drink for yourself when it is your turn.
- Do not take any substances you are not sure of and do not leave your drinks unattended — There are increased reports of 'drink spiking' across Australia so always watch your drink and do not accept drinks from strangers.
- Look out for your friends and team mates — Always watch out for your friends or team mates. If you got into trouble you would expect them to watch out for you. Do not be afraid to let them know that they have had too much. They may not be too impressed when you let them know, but they will most probably thank you the next day.
- Make sure you rehydrate before you go to bed — One of the best ways to prevent a hangover is to make sure you drink water before you go to sleep. Drinking water throughout the evening is also a good option.