

Johnny Health Talk

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What are Your Spring Break Plans?

Health Tidbits

The risk of sleep-related breathing disorders rises with every drink men consume on an average daily basis, according to researchers, The American Academy of Sleep Medicine reported that researchers at the University of Wisconsin at Madison found that risk of sleep disorders rose 25 percent for every drink men consumed on a daily basis when compared to nondrinkers. Women exhibited no increased risk if they drank minimal or moderate amounts of alcohol. The recommendation is to avoid drinking alcohol near bedtime.

Did you know that some users of Facebook have found it nearly impossible to remove themselves entirely from their sites? While the Web site offers users the option to deactivate their accounts, Facebook servers keep copies of the information in those accounts indefinitely. One user describes a 2 1/2 month ordeal where he got customer service representatives to erase most of his information from the site. But even after that, a reporter was able to find the empty profile on Facebook and successfully send him an e-mail message through the network. Facebook reps say it allows ex-Facebookers who choose to return the ability to resurrect their accounts effortlessly. To close a Facebook account fully, the user must delete, line by line, the information that is no longer wanted on the account, even if they have closed the account.

There is an age-old belief that alcohol helps people drown their sorrows. A recent study out of Japan provides information that drinking only makes bad memories linger.

Most people will be headed home for spring break to do some relaxing, maybe work a bit, perhaps spend some time with family and high school friends. Some will head out on an adventure—whether it be volunteering, skiing, climbing, hiking, canoeing, or beach activities. Spring break can be a time of fun and excitement. What it doesn't have to be is a scene from a spring break reality television show, where the extremes have been normalized. Play it smart if you're taking a trip. Risk doesn't always mean more fun, it could also mean negative consequences, some of which could affect your future goals and plans.

If you do head out on a trip, it's better to have a plan—to make decisions in advance that will keep you and your friends safe. Trips can be broken down into a number of categories with safety and health tips in each category. I'll try to do it briefly and in a way that allows you to scan and see what most applies to what you are doing next week.

Personal Safety and Traveling

Remember to practice a "security conscious" lifestyle, even while you are traveling on your vacation. Many places have a higher incidence of crime than St. Joseph or Collegeville and you may need to take some extra precautions to make sure your trip is safe and successful.

- Leave a complete travel schedule with a family member or friend (where and when you will be at a location and how you can be reached).

Road Safety



If you're driving to your destination, you need to think about how to stay safe on the road.

- Know where you are going and how you plan on getting there by mapping out your route.
- Take turns driving to avoid getting fatigued.
- Keep your focus on the road if you are driving and if you are the passenger, don't distract the driver.
- Avoid driving in poor weather if at all possible.
- Don't drink or take any drugs and drive.
- Watch for impaired drivers.
- Wear your seat belts.
- Be prepared for car trouble.

Alcohol and Sexual Decision-Making

This topic comes up in a discussion of spring break because there has been a connection made between spring break trips, sex and alcohol use. The connection is not new but has been heavily exploited by the media and the travel industry targeting college students. Young people may not think, "Oh, I'm going on spring break so I'm going to have sex." But, they may see it as a time for partying and may connect alcohol use to partying. Because alcohol affects judgment and lowers inhibitions, sometimes people do things when they are drunk that they would not do

sober. The choice you make about alcohol may affect other choices you make and a break you looked forward to for so long could become a time of regret. Keep your own boundaries and values in mind when making choices about the activities you participate in at any time and certainly, don't leave them behind just because you are on break. There are physical and emotional risks involved including sexually transmitted diseases, sexual assault and emotional heartache.

Drinking too much with your community of friends in a place that is familiar to you has many risks on its own but adding in an unfamiliar environment, perhaps with people you don't know, and the risk escalates. You need to make smart choices from the very start of your trip to make the experience be a positive one. Here are some tips to help lower the risk:

- Think ahead of time about if and how much you intend to drink, considering consequences.
- Know the laws of the area that you are visiting. It is illegal for persons under age 21 to possess alcohol in all 50 states.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Go out with a group of friends and watch out for each other. Don't leave anyone behind.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help if you feel threatened.

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- Never leave your drink alone or drink anything that you did not see opened or poured.
- Do not spend time alone with someone who makes you feel uneasy or uncomfortable. Follow your instincts and leave a situation that you do not feel good about.
- Stay sober and aware.
- Be aware of the signs that someone may have taken a date-rape drug.

Signs include dizziness and/or nausea, memory loss, breathing or motion difficulties and acting disproportionately intoxicated relative to the amount of alcohol consumed. If you think someone you know has been drugged, go to the nearest emergency room.



- Be aware of the signs of alcohol poisoning.

- passed out and cannot be awakened.
- has cold, clammy or bluish skin color

- slow or irregular breaths: less than 8 times per minute or more than 10 seconds in between breaths.

-person is vomiting and does not wake up.

If any of these symptoms exist, call for help IMMEDIATELY!!!!



Safety in the Sun

If you are heading to the beach or somewhere warm for spring break or even hitting the ski slopes, you might want to take a moment to think about sun protection. Getting overexposed to the sun can lead to more than a sunburn. Skin cancer is the cancer men are most likely to face. Ninety percent of all skin cancers can be attributed to the sun.

- Choose tightly knit fabrics that have fewer or smaller holes between the threads.
- Wear UV Ray-blocking sunglasses.



- Use sunscreen every day.
- Apply sunscreen liberally over all exposed skin areas.
- Choose a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 15 or greater.
- Choose broad-spectrum sunscreens that block both UVA and UVB.
- Choose water-resistant sunscreens that will not wash off as easily.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going out in the sun.



- Limit your time in the sun during peak sun intensity hours (10 a.m.—3:00 p.m.). UV Rays can penetrate through clouds too and snow reflects UV rays back at you.
- Choose darker colors of fabrics because they absorb UV Rays better.
- Choose heavier-weight fabrics because they tend to block more UV rays.
- Stay away from surfaces that reflect sunlight back at you or increase your sun protection. Snow, ice, sand, white cement all increase the effects of UV rays.
- Hitting the ski slopes just puts you that much closer to those rays of sunshine.

If you should experience severe sunburn, especially a blistering burn, consult a doctor without delay. A bad sunburn always requires medical attention.

Make choices that fit for you—your values, your boundaries, your goals!
Have a fun and safe spring break!!!

Impaired Driving: Stats & Tips

- 39% of all traffic deaths in 2005 involved alcohol.
- An estimated 254,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present—an average of one person injured approximately every 2 minutes.
- In 2005, the highest percentage of drivers involved in fatal crashes who had BAC levels of 0.08 g/dl or higher was for drivers ages 21—24, equaling 32% of all drivers involved in fatal crashes with BAC levels above the legal limit.
- The most frequently recorded BAC level among drinking drivers involved in fatal crashes was 0.17 g/dl, more than twice the legal limit.
- The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is more than 5 times higher at night than during the day and almost twice as high on weekends compared to weekdays.

How to Spot an Impaired Driver:

Exaggerated or unusual driving can be a good warning signal that a driver is impaired. If you suspect someone is impaired, drive defensively, allowing plenty of space between you and the suspected car to avoid a collision. Look for these signs:

- Unreasonably fast or slow speeds or inconsistency in speeds
- Frequent lane changing
- Swerving when passing
- Ignoring traffic signals and signs
- Jerky starts and stops
- Drive at night without lights
- Driving too close to the curbs and shoulders, hugging the edge of the road or straddling the center line.