

# Your Guide to Staying Safe While Going Out

## Things happen. Now what?

## Weekend studying

You have an exam early next week, but want to have fun this weekend.

- Plan a fun night with low or no drinking—and still fit in study time. You'll be glad you did.

## Sober night out

You want to go out, but don't want to drink.

- Tell your friends ahead of time.
- Order a fun mocktail.
- Have a ready response if someone offers you a drink: "I'm good with what I've got, thanks."
- You're not alone—about half of Tar Heels haven't drunk alcohol recently either.

## Too much to drink

You're out with friends and realize you've had more to drink than you planned.

- Slow down, space out your drinks, take a break to drink water and eat.
- Consider making a plan to get home.
- Whatever your plan, keep your friends in the loop.

## Vibes are off

You're expecting a fun night, but the vibes are off/you're not feeling it.

- Trust your gut and remember you have choices: go home, grab some friends and go somewhere else, try another event or activity.
- Remember you can restart your night anytime. No need to stay in an uncomfortable situation.

## Feeling unsafe

You're out and start to feel unsafe with the people around you.

- Trust your instincts—your safety matters more than staying in an uncomfortable situation.
- Move to a public, well-lit space. Call or text trusted friends to meet up somewhere nearby.
- If heading home alone, use the [Carolina Ready Safety App](#) tools like [Friend Walk](#), or use [P2P](#) or [SafeWalk](#).
- If there's an emergency, call 911.

## Stress drinking

You've noticed that you're drinking to deal with stress.

- Try other ways to manage stress, like exercise, meditation, or journaling.
- Try confidential therapy by making an appointment at [Student Wellness](#) or walking in at [CAPS](#).

## Big night out

You're planning a big night out.

- Fuel up! Food (especially protein) helps slow alcohol absorption, and staying hydrated all night helps too.
- Set a limit of how much to drink, and stick to it.
- Pace yourself—more time between drinks means more time to enjoy the night.
- Limit strong drinks and shots—they hit fast and can change your night quickly.
- Make a plan: charge your phone, know your options to get home, designate a buddy to keep an eye on you.

## The only sober one

You don't want to drink, but it seems like you're the only one not drinking.

- Remember you're in good company—over a third of UNC students don't drink at all.
- Stick with what makes you feel comfortable, and make plans with friends who support your choices.

## A student alone

You notice a student who is alone and seems disoriented.

- Offer water, food, and help finding friends or getting home.
- Call [P2P](#) or order an Uber/Lyft.
- Use their phone (with permission) to text their friends or roommate.
- Stay with them until they're safe.

## Overdose

You think your friend might be experiencing an overdose.

- Alcohol poisoning, opioid overdose, and other drug reactions can look similar—when in doubt, respond.
- Call 911. [NC's Good Samaritan Law](#) and [UNC's Medical Amnesty Policy](#) protects you and the person overdosing.
- Stay with them. If they're unresponsive, rub their sternum firmly to see if they wake up, and place them on their side.
- Give Naloxone if you have it, even if you don't know what they took.

## Drug use

You're out drinking and there's drug use that's making you feel uncomfortable.

- Remember you have choices.
- Stay with friends, find a trusted person who's not using, or ask others to leave with you.
- You can always say no: "No thanks, not tonight," or "I'm good with what I have."
- Carry Naloxone and let friends know about the [Medical Amnesty Policy](#). Stick with people who can help if something goes wrong.

## Drinking too much

You're worried a friend is overdoing it or using alcohol to cope.

- Share that you're concerned and be present for them.
- Offer to connect them to UNC's confidential support. Find services listed on the [Student Wellness website](#).
- Make plans that don't include alcohol—movies, gamenights, or concerts.

## Throwing up

Your friend is throwing up, passing out, or non-responsive.

- Call 911 if they have **CUSP**:  
**C**old, clammy skin  
**U**nconsciousness  
**S**lowed or irregular breathing  
**P**uking, especially while passed out
- Stay with them, keep them on their side.
- Don't bother with water, coffee, or a cold shower—they don't help.

## Getting home

You're at a party or a bar and need a safe way to get home.

- Ask a friend to leave with you, or tell them your plan.
- Call someone for a ride, catch the [P2P](#), get an Uber/Lyft, or use the [Carolina Ready Safety App](#) tools like [Friend Walk](#) or [SafeWalk](#).

## Drunk driving

You're out with friends when someone who seems impaired offers to drive.

- Suggest another way home—walk together or order a ride (Uber/Lyft).
- Use free campus transport: [P2P](#), buses, or use the [Carolina Ready Safety App](#) to get home safely.
- Offer to help them get their car tomorrow so they don't feel stuck.
- Remind them of the risk. It's not just dangerous; UNC students can lose scholarships, get suspended, and face legal consequences.

## Hangover

You have a bad hangover/hangxiety.

- Have a nutritious meal or smoothie, drink water and electrolytes.
- Get some sunshine, go for a walk, or do a light activity.
- Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling.
- Ask yourself: "Next time, what could make the morning easier?"