

10 tips to prepare for a night out

Whether you are going for a night out and you are planning to drink alcohol or not, there are some important things you can do to make sure that you and your friends are as safe as possible.

1. Find out as much as you can about where you're going
2. Make sure you have the address of where you are going stored on your phone or on a piece of paper in your pocket
3. Plan how you're getting where you're going and how you're coming home
4. Have enough money with you to pay for a taxi ride home, just in case
5. Have your ICE (In Case of Emergency) number stored on your phone
6. Choose a 'buddy' for the night and make sure that they know where you are at all times
7. Ensure that your 'buddy' knows your expectations of what to do if there is an emergency
8. Never go out on an empty stomach
9. Be well hydrated
10. Avoid taking valuables with you

People affected by alcohol or other drugs can be dangerous, whether you know them or not. If you are trying to assist a drunk or drug-affected friend, always remember your first priority must always be personal safety. If in doubt, always call 000.

ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU ARE A FRIEND, NOT A DOCTOR.

If you are planning to go for a night out with friends, whether it be to a party or gathering, a music festival or a dance event, there are a number of things you can do to make sure that you and your friends are as safe as possible. If you are planning on drinking alcohol or taking other drugs there are additional risks to consider, but the following tips are some basic safety strategies that may help you and your friends have a safer night:

1. Find out as much as you can about where you're going

If you're going to a party or gathering, or even to your best friend's house for a sleepover, it is important to get as much information as you can about what will be happening. If it is a party, find out how many people are going? Do you know many of the people invited and where is it being held? If it's a music festival, is it an all ages event, will there be police and drug detection dogs present and have the promoters outlined any special rules or regulations? Just turning up without getting this information can be risky as you may not be fully prepared and find yourself at an event where you really don't feel comfortable at best, and in great danger at worst

2. Make sure you have the address of where you are going stored on your phone or on a piece of paper in your pocket

If something goes wrong and you need to call for help, whether it be for you, a friend or even a stranger, it is extremely important that you know exactly where you are when you make that call. Too often young people have no idea of the address of the party they are attending when they call 000 and they waste time trying to find out the details. Having the address in your phone or on a piece of paper could be the difference between life and death

3. Plan how you're getting where you're going and how you're coming home

Once you know where you're going, plan exactly how you and your friends are going to get there. Do this well ahead of time to ensure that the details are all locked in and you reduce the risks of something going wrong and you potentially missing out on your night out. Unfortunately, some young people do not put a great deal of effort into working out how to get home, preferring to 'see what happens on the night'.

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If you want to stay as safe as possible, however, it is best to make sure you know when you are planning to leave the event and how you are going to get home

4. Have enough money with you to pay for a taxi ride home, just in case

Sometimes even the best plans don't work out and it is always wise to make sure that you put some money away (not necessarily in your wallet or purse) just in case you have to use a taxi to get home. You can always call a taxi company and find out approximately how much the trip would cost, but make sure you tell them that it is a night trip as they are always a little more expensive

5. Have your ICE (In Case of Emergency) number stored on your phone

Enter the acronym ICE into your phone's address book and list the name and number of the person you want to be contacted in an emergency. It doesn't really matter who it is but it would be wise to let them know that they are your ICE contact. It is also recommended that you store your blood type and other relevant information under your ICE entry if your phone allows notes in the contacts section. Unfortunately many people lock their phones and so it isn't always easy to access this number – that is why it is important to also provide your ICE contact to your 'buddy'

6. Choose a 'buddy' for the night and make sure that they know where you are at all times

A 'buddy' is someone that you know you can trust to be there for you for the whole evening. You don't necessarily have to be with them the whole time but you need to ensure that whatever you do and wherever you go, they know about it, particularly if you change any of your plans, e.g., you meet someone special or you get invited to another party

7. Ensure that your 'buddy' knows your expectations of what to do if there is an emergency

You and your buddy need to have a discussion about what would happen if something was to go wrong – both of you need to have total clarity about what you expect the other to do in case of an emergency. Sometimes friends don't contact parents or friends who get into trouble for fear of getting them into trouble – you need to make clear to your buddy that if your life is at risk, you want them to call whoever it takes and you're not worried about getting into trouble!

8. Never go out on an empty stomach

Even if you're not drinking alcohol, it is important to never go out without eating something. A 'fistful of food' (the size of your fist which is roughly the size of your empty stomach) is the perfect amount of food to have and won't make you feel bloated or uncomfortable but will provide you some important energy for the night ahead, particularly if you have some carbs like a small bowl of pasta or a sandwich

9. Be well hydrated

Once again, even if you're not planning to drink alcohol during the night ahead, it is a good idea to make sure you are well hydrated, particularly if you are attending a dance event or music festival. Having a glass of water just before you go out is a smart move, but if you are planning a long night out, drinking water throughout the day and being prepared for possible dehydration is a great idea

10. Avoid taking valuables with you

Even though you may want to look your best it is important to remember that, depending where you are going, wearing expensive jewelry or the latest pair of sneakers can attract unwanted attention. Of course, if you're only with your friends and you have a safe way of getting to and from where you're going, then that shouldn't be an issue. If that isn't the case, be smart and minimize the risk. Even when it comes to mobile phones, if you have an older model that you have in your drawer, take that one to a party, rather than the latest one you just bought