

# The NIDA Blog Team

Halloween is a time when ghosts and goblins of all ages go out to play. Before your night turns dark and stormy, keep this in mind:

- Stick with apple cider and soda or pop. Binge drinking alcohol can lead to some very scary outcomes. Alcohol in any amount is dangerous for teens to drink because it can change the **developing brain** (which is why it is illegal). But binge drinking—five or more drinks for guys and four or more for girls—has the potential for more immediate terrors—it contributes to alcohol poisoning and car crashes. Need some stats?
- In 2010, approximately 189,000 emergency rooms visits were for people under age 21 for injuries and other conditions linked to alcohol.
- Each year, 5,000 people under age 21 die from alcohol-related car crashes, homicides, suicides, poisoning, and other injuries such as falls, burns, and drowning. Halloween is a time when there are lots of parties, so be smart. And if you need a ride home, make sure the driver is sober.
- You may be wearing a Halloween mask, but keep your eyes peeled. Never leave your drink unattended—take it with you no matter where you go. Some people prey on party-goers and spike drinks with club drugs like **ketamine, rohypnol, or GHB**. These are commonly called “**date rape drugs**” because they can cause a person to become weak or confused, or even pass out.
- Fun times with friends don’t mean that you need to get wasted. Throwing up, falling, car accidents, possibly risking rape...definitely sounds like there are much better ways to enjoy Halloween with beasties and buddies. Check out the classic horror movies or hand out candy to trick-or-treaters. Whatever you decide, stay safe.

Tell us: What are your plans this Halloween? What strategies will you use to avoid drugs?

