

Party smarts

December 2016 Newsletter



It's party season and you may be looking forward to celebrations with family, coworkers, neighbors or other friends. Or you might be accompanying your spouse or partner to his or her events.

Whatever types of parties you attend, it's helpful to be aware of good etiquette. Here are some pointers to protect you from party faux pas:

- **Get the details.** Know when the party starts and ends. Respect your host by arriving close to the start time. Sense when the party is winding down and it's time to say goodnight. Get directions ahead of time or plan to use your GPS to ensure you don't arrive late because you're lost.
- **Know the dress code.** You'll want to be dressed to the nines if the invitation calls for cocktail or formal wear. On the other hand, jeans could be just right for a casual event. If you're not sure what "vibe" the host has in mind, check the invitation or call him or her to clarify.
- **Offer your help.** Many hosts already have everything planned but it's nice to offer to bring a dish or a dessert. You can also ask if you can pitch in with setting up, serving or cleaning up. Even if your host says no, the thought will be appreciated.
- **Bring a thank you.** Remember to bring a small personal or house gift to thank the host for including you.
- **Have a snack before the party.** This can be a helpful strategy especially if you're trying to watch calories at this taste-tempting time of year. Having a healthy snack — like veggies or fruit — at home can keep you from arriving at the party famished and ready to eat more than you normally would.

- **Be on your best behavior.** This is especially true for office parties. You may be at a party, but it's still a work event with people you know professionally. Protect your good reputation at work by mingling and having fun but avoid gossiping, flirting or drinking too much. After all, you don't want to be tomorrow morning's water cooler headline.
- **Temper your cocktail count.** There are different reasons why people drink too much alcohol at parties. In many cases, guests over-drink because they feel nervous or awkward; they think a few drinks will help them relax. If you do feel shy, see if you can buddy up with a friend and go to the party together. If you expect to drink, be sure you have a safe plan to get home with a designated driver.

Be the guest you'd like to entertain

Perhaps the best advice is to be the party-goer you'd like to have at your own party. Have fun, socialize, eat and maybe even drink in moderation. Above all, be an asset to the gathering. That's the best way to have fun — and get invited back next year!