

## AZ Health: Avoiding Relapse During the Holidays

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Holiday season is almost upon us, and with that comes parties and festivities to celebrate. While it is known as the most wonderful time of year, these next couple of months can be quite stressful and even triggering for recovering addicts. The pressure of having to socialize in large groups with alcohol so readily available can create a very dangerous and tempting environment for someone who is in the midst of sobriety. David Larimer, Clinical Program Director, from [Scottsdale Recovery Center](#), has 10 important tips to help you stay strong on your recovery path while also enjoying these upcoming holidays!

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**Do not miss any of your meetings:** Whether you're seeing a therapist, sponsor or attending weekly meetings, make sure to keep these sessions a priority and even attend more if you can! This will ensure that your support system is as strong as ever.

**Take it easy on the holiday foods:** Indulging in too much coffee, sugar and fatty foods can increase your fatigue levels, which in turn can lead to more stress. Make sure to get enough rest, exercise daily and stay on a balanced diet. Of course you can have the delicious holiday meals we all look forward to, but make sure it is in moderation!

**Make a 'party' plan:** Holiday parties will be swarming with opportunities to relapse, so plan in advance on how to say 'no' in a way that is comfortable for you. If you feel the temptation will be too much for you, then don't go. Only put yourself in situations you know you are strong enough to handle.

**Ask for help from family and friends:** Having supporters on your recovery journey can be a massive weight off your shoulders. These people can accompany you to events, or can always be a phone call away if you find yourself struggling. Always have someone positive to turn to.

**Volunteer:** Often times, the holidays can lead to depression if you feel you are missing out on certain parties or traditions, but you can fill this void by doing something positive and beneficial for the community. Volunteering is a reliable way of making sure that your time is being spent in a healthy manner, while also helping out those in need! It's a win-win.

**Be ready to talk about your sobriety:** Rejecting drinks at a party can often times raise questions and curiosity from others. Make sure that you know how to respond to someone wanting to know why you're saying 'no.'

**Have a go to non-alcoholic drink:** Bring a non-alcoholic drink option to help curb your temptation to have a cocktail. If you are ordering a nonalcoholic drink, you can ask for it to be in a cocktail glass to avoid being asked questions.

**Self-care is important:** Take time out from all of the festivities to treat yourself. Read a good book, watch your favorite movie or even spend some time meditating. These moments alone can be the key to re-centering yourself.

**Stay away from negative places/people:** For many, the holiday's means returning home and to some people that can bring back pretty jarring memories. If you know you're going to be near certain places that can trigger you, make sure to steer clear of them. Find somewhere fun and new to hang out at with people you trust will support you!

**Give thanks:** We often forget what this time of year is truly about in the middle of all the craziness, so make sure to acknowledge everything you've accomplished. Being sober is a very important and a positive journey. It is vital to remain in gratitude, and remind your support system that you are thankful for them for sticking by your side through your recovery journey.