



Kiss Me I'm Irish

"Sláinte Mhath!" as the Irish would say, meaning "good health." Every mid-March all around the globe, from Georgia to China people embrace the Irish spirit and honor St. Patrick's Day. Week long festivities traditionally include parades, shamrocks, and green folly in full force. Many, supporters of this holiday spend time in packed pubs that serve Irish food and green beer. Celebrating the St Patrick's Day has turned into a ritual of consuming pints of stout and shots of whiskey, making March 17th one of the most alcohol-fueled days of the year which increase the risk for binge drinking.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define binge drinking as a pattern of alcohol use, that raises a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to .08 or higher. A BAC of .08 is reached after only 5 drinks for most men and 4 drinks for most women. While the most prevalent group to engage in this type of behavior are between the ages of 18-29 year old the reality is anyone can binge drink at any age.

Inappropriate alcohol consumption is often connected to sexual-assault cases, by the either the alleged victim and/or the alleged accused. A report conducted by Plattsburgh University, stated that 85% of reported sexual assaults involved alcohol. The FBI also estimated that 45% of all accused sexual assault offenders were under the influence of alcohol at the time of their alleged crimes.

By drinking in moderation, and respecting your limits of alcohol consumption you maintain the ability to communicate limits and identify risky situations in your environment. Subsequently, by practicing responsible use of alcohol, especially on heavy drinking occasions like St. Patrick's Day, you are able to significantly minimize the risk of potential sexual assault for yourself and those around you.

In the current Bystander intervention training it is emphasized a bystander can be instrumental in preventing sexual assaults. Help avoid the risk of potential assaults by getting involved and encouraging others to do the same when warning signs appear. One of the many positive steps we can all take to be a good "wingman" is to be a pro-active bystander; don't be afraid to assist your fellow airmen, family, or friends if they are in a uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situation. Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault, at anytime. Avoiding the risk is a responsibility that belongs to all of us.

So during the week surrounding St. Patrick's Day, enjoy some cheer and stay in "Sláinte Mhath" (good health), just don't count on the luck of the Irish to get you home safely.

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