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Friends Don’t Let Friends Hook Up Drunk

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In the words of Coach Carr, don’t get drunk and have sex. Because you will get pregnant. And die.

OK, so maybe that isn’t quite how the infamous “Mean Girls” quote goes, but it’s close enough. The “get slizzard and hook up” culture is huge on nearly every college campus, and, unfortunately, while doing “it” or getting close to doing “it” with some random guy on a Friday night seems like a good idea at the time, things aren’t usually quite so blissful the next morning. Or even the night of, when you get back to his place and sober up enough to realize he’s kind of creepy and you’re not as into him as you thought you were.

Alcohol is a catalyst for bad decisions, especially when consumed in large doses. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism’s Underage Drinking Research Initiative, alcohol is the drug of choice among adolescents, and when youth drink, they drink excessively. The NIAAA defines “drinking excessively” or “binge drinking” as a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 percent or above. For men, this equates to consuming five or more drinks in two hours and for women, consuming four or more drinks in two hours.

For approximately 40 percent of college students, binge drinking is the activity of choice on any given Friday or Saturday night, which means things can get scary. In light of this, a number of prevention programs have been developed and a great deal of research has been conducted. Let’s Talk About It is one of many programs that addresses alcohol-fueled sexual decisions. LTAI uses scenario-based simulations to better understand how students respond to drunken hook-up situations. For instance, say you’re in line with your friends at Superdog at 1 a.m. (more than four drinks deep) and you’re flirting hard-core with that guy you’ve had your eye on for awhile. Things get heated, and he invites you back to his place.

In a similar scenario involving a hypothetical friend’s potential hook-up played out by LTAI, 141 students were given three situational responses to choose from. Thirty-nine percent of students said as a friend they would try to persuade her (Superdog line girl) not to go back to his place by warning her she might regret it, 21 percent said they would wish her a fun time and 39 percent said they would make sure she got home safely.

In total, more than 70 percent of college students will hook up with a casual partner before graduating.

There are a lot of statistics, but boil them down and the news is good: your friends have your back. More than 75 percent of students are watching out for their friends and trying to prevent drunken hook-ups from happening.

Iowa State University sociologist Teresa Downing-Matibag’s research investigates the physical and emotional repercussions of no-strings-attached hook-ups. Downing-Matibag’s goal is to promote healthier intimate relationships among ISU students within and outside of the classroom. A 2009 study published by Downing-Matibag and graduate student Brandi Geisinger on 71 college students’ hook-up behaviors found students underestimate the risks (sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy and emotional distress, just to name a few) that come with a night of “fun.”

Bottom line, hooking up is part of the typical college experience. If you’re gonna do it (and let’s be real, you probably are), use the buddy system. Tell a sista (or brotha) where you’re going. Don’t go to some sketchy place with some dude you just met on the street. And always, always use a condom.