

The Impact of Excessive Drinking

Approximately 88,000 deaths are attributed to excessive drinking each year in the U.S. There are more than 1.2 million emergency department visits and 2.7 million doctors office visits each year due to excessive drinking.



The first step is recognizing that your alcohol use is causing problems in your life.

Reaching out for support is the second step. Whether you choose to go to rehab, use a self-help program, get therapy, or turn to trusted friends or your faith community, support is essential.

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For More Information

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

www.niaaa.nih.gov

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/alcohol

Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous is a free peer support group for individuals and families coping with alcoholism.

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org

SMART Recovery offers a free program based on scientific research to help people recover from addiction and addictive behaviors.

www.smartrecovery.org

866-951-5357

Women for Sobriety is a self-help program for women with addictions.

www.womenforsobriety.org

215-536-8026

Find Local Treatment

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

(800) 662-HELP or www.findtreatment.gov

Alcohol and Drug Helpline

1-800-821-4357



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Resources for Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



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What is excessive drinking?

Excessive drinking includes binge drinking, heavy drinking, and any amount of drinking by underage individuals or pregnant women.

Binge drinking is consuming five or more drinks for a man or four or more drinks for a woman in one occasion. On average this pattern of drinking will lead to a blood alcohol content of 0.08%, the limit for driving while intoxicated in all 50 states.

Heavy drinking is considered more than 14 drinks per week for a man or seven drinks per week for a woman.



What is the difference between alcohol abuse and alcoholism?

Alcohol abuse refers to a pattern of drinking which harms one's health, relationships with other people or ability to work.

Long term alcohol abuse can lead to alcoholism, in which the body becomes dependent on alcohol is unable to limit drinking.



Signs of Alcohol Abuse

- Failure to fulfill major responsibilities at work, school or home
- Drinking while driving or in other dangerous situations
- Legal problems related to alcohol
- Continued drinking despite ongoing relationship problems due to or worsened by drinking

Alcohol Withdrawal

If you drink heavily and regularly, your body can become dependent on alcohol. When this happens, alcohol withdrawal can start within hours of the last drink, peak in a day or two, and usually resolves by day five. Symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shaking
- Sweating
- Anxiety
- Difficulty sleeping

Some alcoholics may experience a severe, life-threatening form of withdrawal called delirium tremens. Symptoms include:

- Severe confusion and disorientation
- Fever
- Hallucinations
- Seizures
- Fast heart rate and high blood pressure

If you experience these withdrawal symptoms, call 911 or have someone take you to the emergency department right away.

