

Substance Abuse or Dependence

What is substance abuse?

Substance abuse is a pattern of using alcohol or drugs that leads to problems in a person's life. These problems can:

- Cause problems with family or friends
- Cause trouble with the law, or at work or school
- Put others at risk for harm when driving, working with tools or watching children

What is substance dependence or addiction?

Substance dependence or addiction is when the body is so used to getting drugs or alcohol that it has to have it or the person gets sick. Over time, this person will need more alcohol or drugs to get the same effect. As this "dependence" grows, many problems can happen:

- Slipping further away from family and friends.
- Performance falls at work or school.
- Health problems begin.
- Physical or emotional pain ("withdrawal") when the person cuts back or stops use.

Legal and illegal substance most often abused include:

- Alcohol
- Nicotine in tobacco
- Marijuana or hashish
- Cocaine or crack
- Hallucinogens (LSD, Mescaline & PCP)
- Sedatives (Seconal, Fiorinal, Tuinal)
- Opiates (Codeine, Oxycontin, Vicodin, or Heroin)
- Amphetamines (Dexadrine & Benzedrine)
- Tranquilizers (Valium, Xanax & Ativan)
- "Club drugs" (GHB & Ecstasy)
- Inhalants (glue, gas, paint, & nitroglycerine)
- Anabolic steroids
- Sleeping medicines (Ambien, Dalmane, & Nembutal)



Signs of substance abuse or addiction:

- Being less involved in activities
- Getting in trouble with the law
- Hiding or sneaking alcohol or drugs
- Pressuring others to drink or use drugs
- Feeling depressed, hopeless, or suicidal
- Lying and not keeping promises to stop or lower use
- Getting defensive or angry when asked about their use
- Drinking or using drugs despite the problems they cause
- Missing or doing poorly at work or school due to drug or alcohol use
- Taking risks such as driving while high or drunk, or taking sexual risks
- Having "blackouts" – drinking or using drugs that they cannot remember



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