



Alcohol Misuse

In the U.S., alcohol consumption is legal. People often drink a glass of wine with dinner or have a drink with friends. Alcohol use becomes a problem when a person drinks several drinks at a time, is unable to stop drinking, and/or puts their own or others' safety in jeopardy. Alcohol Use Disorder is one of the most common types of substance use disorders. Alcohol misuse is also referred to as problem drinking and is characterized by an inability to control alcohol intake and experiencing withdrawal symptoms

Facts about alcohol misuse:

- About 1 in 8 adults meet the criteria for alcohol use disorders, according to the American Medical Association.
- Problem drinking can be genetic, but factors such as living with depression or anxiety can also make someone more likely to become dependent on alcohol.
- Binge drinking is defined as 4 or more drinks during a single occasion for women and 5 or more drinks during a single occasion for men.
- According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, moderate drinking is considered to be 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men.

[MindWise.org](https://www.MindWise.org)

when alcohol use stops. Frequent hangovers are also a sign of excessive drinking. Problem drinking can impact job performance and strain personal relationships.

People drink for different reasons – for fun, stress relief, a way to wind down from the day, or sometimes to self-medicate. Alcohol misuse can change how a person acts toward others by impairing judgment and lowering inhibitions, leading to irresponsible behaviors. Over time, a person who drinks heavily can build up a tolerance – meaning they will need more and more drinks to achieve a desired effect.

Treatment can help

The first step in addressing any substance addiction is recognizing the problem and being open to engaging in treatment. There are various options for alcohol misuse treatment so that you can find one that is the best fit. Some interventions have a medical component.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can be very effective in treating alcohol misuse. CBT can help a person to identify triggers and warning signs that can lead to alcohol misuse.

Integrated care, which addresses both substance abuse and mental health, can be helpful in supporting a person's recovery.

Behavioral therapy focuses on breaking the cycle that leads to alcohol misuse.

Other forms of treatment include medications for withdrawal symptoms or to address behavioral health issues.

Support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and self-help materials can also be useful.

RESOURCES

The National Drug Helpline: 1-844-289-0879

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline
800-662-HELP (4357) TTY: 800-487-4889

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available 24 hours everyday: 1-800-273-8255

National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org/Learn-More

For additional information on finding help and treatment options, visit www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment.