

Recognize Addiction

HOW TO TELL IF YOU HAVE A DRINKING OR DRUG PROBLEM

If you are addicted to alcohol or drugs, craving the substance can be as strong as the need for food or water. You are unable to stop using the substance even though it causes or worsens problems for you, family, friends, and coworkers. Your drinking or drug use may put you and others in danger or cause legal problems.



SIGNS YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

Signs depend on the substance. Common ones include:

- Your use and tolerance of alcohol or a drug has increased. You need more of the substance to get “high.”
- You hide alcohol or drugs at home or at work.
- You often carry drugs and/or items such as glass pipes, straws and needles used to take the drugs.
- You get withdrawal symptoms when you stop using the substance. Examples are:
 - Anxiety
 - Being very edgy
 - Blackouts
 - Chills or sweating
 - Delirium
 - Depression
 - Feeling “spaced out”
 - Hallucinations
 - Panic
 - Seizures
 - Tremors of the hands or face

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

- You develop a pattern of being absent or late for work.
- You have mood swings.
- You have temper flare-ups.
- You keep asking family and friends for money.
- You develop a habit of stealing to support your habit.
- You become very secretive about your life.
- You have a new group of friends who drink a lot or use drugs.
- You have problems dealing with others.

Action Step

The first step to recovery is admitting that you have a problem. You may not recognize it at first, but the people around you do. Listen to them. Then ask for help.