

# Substance Abuse or Dependence

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

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

**Substance dependence** is the need for alcohol or drugs. A person continues to drink or use drugs in spite of problems in his or her life. The person often needs more alcohol or drugs to get the same effect. As dependence grows, the person slips further away from family and friends. Performance at work or school drops and health problems occur. This person may not be able to see how alcohol or drug use is affecting his or her life. There may be signs of physical or emotional distress when the person cuts back or stops use. This is called withdrawal.

## Substances Most Often Abused

Alcohol is the most often abused drug. Substance abuse can be the use of legal or illegal substances. Substances most often abused include:

- Alcohol such as beer, wine and liquor
- Nicotine in cigarettes and chewing tobacco
- Marijuana or hashish and cocaine or crack
- Hallucinogens such as LSD, mescaline and PCP
- Sedatives such as Seconal, Fiorinal and Tuinal
- Opiates such as codeine, OxyContin, Vicodin or heroin
- Amphetamines such as dexadrine and Benzedrine
- Tranquilizers such as Valium, Xanax and Ativan

- Club drugs such as Ecstasy, GHB and MDMA
- Inhalants such as glue, gas, paint and nitroglycerine
- Anabolic steroids
- Sleeping medicines such as Ambien, Dalmane and Nembutal
- Others such as muscle relaxants, sleep aids, Ritalin, Coricidin HBP, cough syrups and many over the counter medicines

## **Signs of Substance Abuse or Dependency**

Talk to your doctor, nurse or counselor about getting help if you have any of these signs.

- You get high or intoxicated on a regular basis.
- You drink or use drugs in spite of the problems it causes.
- You are not able to keep promises to stop or cut down use.
- You lie about use, especially about how much or often you drink or use drugs.
- You become defensive or angry when confronted about use.
- You withdraw from family and friends.
- You prefer the company of other drinkers or users.
- You become less involved in activities you used to enjoy.
- You talk a lot about alcohol or drugs.
- You believe you need to drink or use in order to have fun.
- You pressure others to drink or use.
- You hide or sneak alcohol, drugs or supplies.
- You get in trouble with the law.
- You take risks, such as driving when high or when drunk, or take sexual risks.
- You perform poorly at work or school due to using before, during or after work or class.
- You miss work or school due to substance use.
- You have blackouts – periods of time when using that you cannot remember.

- You have mood swings.
- You have depressed, hopeless or suicidal feelings.

## **Hotlines**

There is help available 24 hours a day for the person using the alcohol or drugs, as well as for family members and friends.

**Alcoholics Anonymous** (614) 253-8501

**Al-Anon / Al-Teen** (614) 253-2701  
1-888-425-2666

**Hope Hotline** (614) 228-4673

**Ohio Tobacco Quitline** 1-800-784-8669

**Cocaine Hotline** (614) 443-2653

**Narcotics Anonymous** 1-800-451-3000