Alcohol and Drug Problems

What is it?
You can improve your life and health by stopping your use of alcohol or drugs. Ending dependency on alcohol or drugs may help you feel and sleep better. You may get along better with your family, friends, and coworkers. There are medicines and programs that can help.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It’s also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?
- If you have been given medicine to help keep you sober or reduce your cravings, be sure to take it as prescribed.
- Talk to your doctor about programs that can help you stop using drugs or drinking alcohol.
- If your doctor prescribes disulfiram (Antabuse), do not drink any alcohol while you are taking this medicine. You may have severe, even life-threatening, side effects from even small amounts of alcohol.
- Do not tempt yourself by keeping alcohol or drugs in your home.
- Learn how to say no when other people drink or use drugs. Or don’t spend time with people who drink or use drugs.
- Use the time and money spent on drinking or drugs to do something fun with your family or friends.

Preventing a relapse
- Do not drink alcohol or use drugs at all. Using any amount of alcohol or drugs greatly increases your risk for relapse.
- Seek help from organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or treatment facilities if you feel the need to drink alcohol or use drugs again.
- Remember that recovery is a lifelong process.
- Stay away from situations, friends, or places that may lead you to drink or use drugs.
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- Have a plan to spot and deal with relapse. Learn to recognize changes in your thinking that lead you to drink or use drugs. These are warning signs. Get help before you start to drink or use drugs again.
- Get help as soon as you can if you relapse. Some people make a plan with another person that outlines what they want that person to do for them if they relapse. The plan usually includes how to handle the relapse and who to notify in case of relapse.
- Don't give up. Remember that a relapse does not mean that you have failed. Use the experience to learn the triggers that lead you to drink or use drugs. Then quit again. Many people have several relapses before they are able to quit for good.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:
- You feel you cannot stop from hurting yourself or someone else.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:
- You have serious withdrawal symptoms such as confusion, hallucinations, or severe trembling.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:
- You have a relapse.
- You need more help or support to stop.

For more information go to:
- kp.org/santaclara/bhc
- Substance use - Mental health and emotional wellness

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