

EAP Educates: Is Alcohol your Drug?

Facts about alcohol

Alcohol is a Central Nervous System depressant – it slows down your brain function and nervous system and causes problems with concentration, co-ordination, sight and judgement

The average safe alcohol limit is two standard drinks in 24 hrs.

Alcoholism is a disease which progresses and can lead to death if not treated.

Alcohol is a problem when:

- Your drinking negatively affects your:
 - Mental health – i.e. you rely on alcohol to solve your problems or to cope. Such as, you think “I **need** a drink” rather than “I would like a drink”
 - Physical health – i.e. when you are not drinking you suffer from withdrawal symptoms (headaches, irritability, sweating, anxiety, confusion)
 - Family life – i.e. conflict increases among family members and things are said about your drinking.
 - Work situation – i.e. you are absent or late more often
 - Financial status – i.e. you spend a lot more money on alcohol and pay less attention to your financial concerns e.g. accounts.
- You cannot stop or limit your drinking.
- You lose control of yourself, your responsibilities, duties and activities because of your drinking.
- You drink because it helps you to relax and escape your problems.
- You drink at socially unacceptable times, or in socially unacceptable places – i.e. drinking before you come to work, secret drinking, camouflage drinking.
- You wonder if you have an alcohol problem.

Symptoms of alcohol dependence

- Secret drinking – i.e. hiding liquor
- Guilt feelings – i.e. becoming shameful of your drinking
- Gulping – i.e. drinking faster than others and drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short space of time.
- Shaking – i.e. particularly the hands.
- Regmakers – i.e. usually in the morning to prevent withdrawal symptoms.
- Physically compulsive drinking – i.e. drinking to feel normal.



- Changing drinking companions.
- Blackouts and memory loss.
- Repeated drunkenness.
- Loss of appetite and loss of weight.
- Drinking alone.
- Alcohol withdrawal – i.e. trembling, sweating, anxiety, confused, disoriented, irritability.
- Binge drinking.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Drinking to build confidence.

Treatment

- Outpatient Treatment (E.A.P. / S.A.N.C.A.)
 - Outpatient treatment consists of the following:
 - Medication to counteract withdrawal symptoms
 - Individual counselling, normally on a weekly basis
 - Group counselling / information sessions on a weekly basis
 - Attendance at an AA group weekly
- Inpatient treatment (3 – 6 weeks live in)
 - Inpatient treatment consists of the following:
 - A six day detox program (to remove alcohol from the body). This is followed by long term outpatient treatment.
 - A 21 day to 6 week programme, including detox, counselling and group therapy. This is followed by ongoing aftercare support and AA meetings.

(Please note treatment clinics vary by province and the most suitable programme is found to assist the individual client)

Important Note:

If alcohol is a problem in your life or the life of a loved one, it is important to realise that alcohol abuse is an illness, not a disgrace. Further, it is an illness (like many others) that can be treated and the addiction can be beaten. People do recover.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE, CONTACT THE EAP