

# Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction

**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 for harm when driving, working with tools or watching children
- Cause problems with family or friends
- Cause trouble with the law, or at work or school

**Substance dependence or addiction** 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 over time to get the same effect. As dependence grows, many problems can occur:

- The person slips further away from family and friends
- Performance at work or school drops
- Health problems begin
- Physical or emotional pain (called withdrawal) when the person cuts back or stops use

## 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
- Street or club drugs, such as marijuana, bath salts, cocaine or crack, or other inhalants such as glue, gas or paint.
- Prescription or over the counter medicines
- Muscle relaxants and medicines for anxiety or sleep
- Anabolic steroids



## Signs of Substance Abuse or Dependency

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

- I get high or intoxicated on a regular basis.
- I lie about use, especially about how much or often I drink or use drugs.
- I become defensive or angry when confronted about my use.
- I avoid my family and friends.
- I prefer the company of other drinkers or users.
- I am less involved in activities that I used to enjoy.
- I talk a lot about alcohol or drugs.
- I pressure others to drink or use.
- I have been in trouble with the law.
- I take risks, such as driving when high or drunk, or take sexual risks.
- I perform poorly at work or school due to using before, during or after work or class.
- I feel depressed, hopeless, or suicidal.

## Hotlines

Get help 24 hours a day for drug and alcohol problems. The hotlines and websites below offer help to the person using alcohol or drugs, as well as for family members and friends.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Website</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Alcoholics Anonymous	<a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.org</a>	510-839-8900 East Bay 925-829-0666 Valley
California Smoker's Helpline	<a href="http://www.nobutts.org">www.nobutts.org</a>	1-800-662-8887
Cocaine Hotline	<a href="http://www.ca.org">www.ca.org</a>	1-800-347-8998
Marijuana Anonymous	<a href="http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org">www.marijuana-anonymous.org</a>	1-800-766-6779
Narcotics Anonymous	<a href="http://www.na.org">www.na.org</a>	1-818-773-9999

## Questions? Alameda Alliance for Health is here to help.

Call **510-747-4567** or Toll-Free: 1-877-932-2738

CRS/TTY: 711 or 1-800-735-2929

8am-5pm, Monday-Friday

[www.alamedaalliance.org](http://www.alamedaalliance.org)

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