1. Alcohol & Drug Facts

Alcohol is a depressant. It is the most widely used drug in the world.

Sources of Alcohol
• Beer. This has about 5% alcohol. Lite beers have about 3% alcohol.
• Wine. This usually has between 11 and 14% alcohol.
• Hard liquors (e.g., gin, rum, vodka, whiskey). The word "proof" means 2 times the % of alcohol. For example, 80-proof means 50% alcohol.
• Some medicines. Read the labels.

One standard drink has about 1/2 oz. of pure alcohol in a 12 oz. glass or can of beer; 1 oz. of 80-proof distilled spirits; or 5 oz. of wine.

About 1 in 4 persons who die from suicide in the U.S. have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 or higher.
5. Alcohol & Drug Dependence (Addiction)

Dependence is addiction. An alcoholic is addicted to alcohol. A person who depends on drugs is addicted to that drug (or drugs he or she has used).

• You crave the substance. The craving can feel as strong as the need for food or water.
• You are often unable to stop using the substance.
• You get withdrawal symptoms when you stop using the substance. The symptoms vary with the drug used. These symptoms go away if you drink alcohol or use the drug.
• You need more and more alcohol or drugs to get “high.” This is known as developing a tolerance.

Risk Factors for Alcohol & Drug Abuse and Dependence

• Increased use and tolerance of alcohol or a drug
• Family history of alcohol or drug abuse
• You are about 3 to 5 times more likely to be an alcoholic if one of your parents is. You are 10 times more likely if both parents are.
• Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or poor self-esteem
• Prolonged use of prescribed pain pills
• Prolonged fatigue or stress
• Peer pressure. This is especially true for teens.
• Ongoing financial or family problems

Signs of Alcohol/Drug Abuse and Dependence

Signs will depend on the substance. They include:

- Drugs or items used to take drugs are found. Examples are glass pipes (to smoke marijuana), straws (to sniff drugs), and needles (to inject drugs).
- Alcohol is found hidden at home or at work.
- Withdrawal symptoms: These include:
  - Tremors of the hand or face
  - Chills, sweating
  - Nausea, vomiting
  - Fatigue, Depression
  - Anxiety, Panic
  - Being very edgy
  - Insomnia
  - Blackouts
  - Adventures that aren’t “realized”
  - Hallucinations
  - Delirium
  - Seizures
- Behavior changes: These include:
  - Being late or absent at work or school. Often, this happens on Mondays and Fridays.
  - Abrupt change in mood or attitude
  - Temper flare-ups that are not usual
  - Asking for money, more than usual, from family and friends
  - Stealing items from work, home, stores, school, etc.
  - Being more and more secretive about actions and things that are owned
  - Being with a new group of people, especially with those who drink a lot or use drugs
  - Having problems dealing with others

Questions to Detect an Alcohol Problem

The examiner should ask the questions in this section. The examiner will determine if the person’s responses indicate the need for further professional assistance.

• Have you ever felt you should Cut down on your drinking?
• Have you ever felt bad or Guilty about your drinking?
• Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
• Have you ever felt you should Cut down on your drinking?

This is the examiner’s way of asking the four questions below that form the acronym CAGE.

Reasons to Get Help

Alcohol and drug abuse and dependence can be treated. Two or more “Yes” answers means it is highly likely that there is an alcohol problem. In either case, your doctor may suggest you contact your doctor or other health care provider to discuss your responses to these questions. (See “Getting Help,” topic 7.) You may have answered “No” to all four questions, but there could still be a problem. Some people have an alcohol problem without realizing it.

Where to Get Help

- Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at work, if you have one. You may choose to go. No one else is told about it.
- A drug treatment clinic:
  - Support groups

Your EAP or health care provider will refer you to a treatment program best suited for you, such as a treatment or “sober” center. Treatment can be given in outpatient or inpatient settings. Components of treatment are:

- A complete physical exam
- “Detox” – Getting the person off the abused substance. Sometimes other drugs are used to control the withdrawal symptoms that occur.
- Counseling – One-on-one, group therapy, and/or family sessions. The goals are:
  - To understand the addiction
  - To get the person to be well, physically and mentally
  - To help the addict stop using alcohol and drugs.
  - Learning life-coping skills and how to deal with "high-risk" times and places can help prevent the addict from using the substance again.

You may be advised to take part in a self-help group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. For More Information, Contact:

· Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) World Services 212.870.3400 or look in your local phone book www.aa.org

· Anonymous. 6th ed., © 2011. Alcohol and drug abuse and dependence are can

• Be a secret or hidden problem. One or more of the problems, listed below, in a 12-month period.

- You fail to fulfill work, school, or home duties.
- You drink or use drugs and put you or others in danger (e.g., when you drive a car or operate a machine).
- You have a legal problem from alcohol or drugs.
- You keep drinking or taking drugs even though it causes or worsens problems with others.

6. How to Tell If You Have a Problem

The first step is to admit there is a problem. Often, the person who has the problem does not see the harm that it causes. Other persons around him or her see the problem first. Knowing how harmful alcohol and drug abuse and dependence are can help a person seek treatment.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 800.662.HELP (4357) www.samhsa.gov Provides a free treatment referral service to link people with community-based substance abuse services they need.


American Council on Drug Education (ACDE) 800.488-DRUG (4887) www.acde.org A self-help program for parents, and friends of alcoholics. Also a referral line.


AlAnon/Alateen World Service Office 888-4A-LANON (4265) www.al-anon.org A self-help program for families and friends of alcoholics.


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