

Substance Use, Abuse, & Addiction

Substance abuse is a pattern of using drugs or alcohol that leads to problems in a person's life. Substance abuse is not a problem just for the person abusing. Substance abuse can:

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

Substance dependence or addiction is when the body is so used to getting drugs or alcohol that it has to have it or the person gets sick. Over time, this person will need more alcohol or drugs to get the same effect. As this "dependence" grows, many problems can happen:

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



Hotlines

Get help 24 hours a day for drug and alcohol problems. The hotlines below offer help for the person using, as well as for family and friends of users.

Alcoholics Anonymous San Francisco:
(415) 674-1821

Narcotics Anonymous San Francisco:
(415) 621-8600

For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.
Or visit **www.healthysanfrancisco.org**

Substances Most Often Abused

Substance abuse includes legal and illegal substances. Alcohol is the most often abused substance. Others include:

- Nicotine in cigarettes and chewing tobacco
- Marijuana or hashish
- Cocaine or crack
- Hallucinogens such as *LSD*, *Mescaline*, and *PCP*
- Sedatives such as *Seconal*, *Fiorinal*, *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 GHB and MDMA (ecstasy)
- Inhalants such as glue, gas, paint, and nitroglycerine
- Anabolic steroids, usually used for body building or athletics
- Sleeping medicines such as *Ambien*, *Dalmane*, and *Nembutal*

Signs of Abuse or Addiction

Talk to your healthcare provider or a therapist about getting help if you or someone you know has any of these signs:

- Getting high or drunk often
- Drinking or using drugs in spite of the problems they cause
- Not keeping promises to stop or lower use
- Lying about how often you/they are drinking or using drugs
- Getting defensive or angry when other people ask about your/their use
- Being less involved in activities and with people you/he/she used to enjoy
- Pressuring others to drink or use drugs
- Hiding or sneaking alcohol or drugs
- Getting in trouble with the law
- Taking risks such as driving while high or drunk, or taking sexual risks
- Doing poorly at work or school due to drug or alcohol use
- Missing work or school due to drug or alcohol use
- Having “blackouts” – times of drinking or using drugs that you/he/she cannot remember
- Big or abnormal mood swings
- Feeling depressed, hopeless, or thinking of killing oneself

Adapted from:

“*Substance Abuse or Dependence*”
www.healthinfotranslations.org

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