



Substance Use Prevention Toolkit | *Article*

Hidden in Plain Sight: Alcohol Use Disorder

Understanding Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is one of the most common substance use disorders. Because drinking is often part of social events, it can be hard to tell when alcohol use is becoming a problem.

Many people drink from time to time. For some, however, drinking becomes difficult to control and begins to affect their health, relationships and daily life.

Signs That Drinking May Be a Problem

Many people have a drink to relax, spend time with friends or celebrate special occasions. But there are signs that alcohol use may be becoming unhealthy.

One warning sign is needing alcohol to fall asleep. Another is showing up late, missing work, skipping school or not taking care of daily responsibilities.

Changes in weight can also happen because alcohol can affect appetite and eating habits.

Drinking can also become expensive. Even a daily drink can add up over time and put stress on your finances.

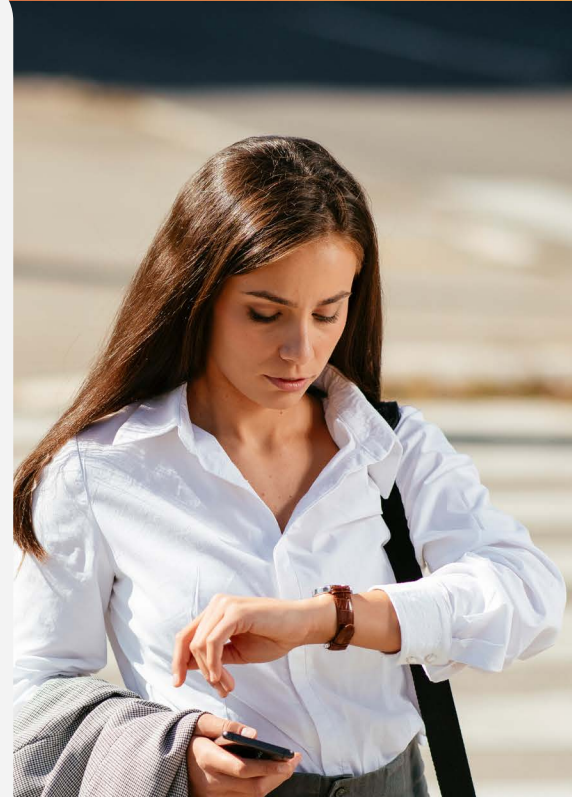
Alcohol use can affect relationships as well. Arguments, broken trust and changes in behavior while drinking can hurt relationships with family and friends. This can lead to loneliness, which may make a person want to drink even more.

If drinking is causing problems at home, work, school or in relationships, it may be time to seek help.

Taking the First Step

It can be hard to admit that drinking has become a problem. Many people feel worried, embarrassed or unsure about asking for help. But reaching out for support is a strong and important step.

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More than 65 million Americans report binge drinking in the past month, which is more than 40% of the total of current alcohol users.

National Institute on
Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism

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If any of these signs sound familiar, know that help is available. Options may include:

- Counseling
- Support groups
- Treatment programs
- Medical care and support

Recovery takes time, and everyone's journey is different. There may be challenges along the way, but change is possible. With the right support, people can learn healthier ways to cope and build a life that is not controlled by alcohol.

Remember: Recovery starts with one step. Asking for help can be the beginning of positive change.

#SupportSobriety #RealRecovery

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use or addiction, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357.

Reviewed by Medical Director, Doctor of Medicine.