



## Alcohol Use

Do I have a problem?

### What is alcoholism?

It is a pattern of alcohol use that can include problems controlling your drinking, being preoccupied with drinking, continuing to use alcohol even when it causes problems, having to drink more to get the same effect, or having withdrawal symptoms when you rapidly decrease or stop drinking. This can lead to repeated significant distress and problems functioning in your daily life.

### How does it affect you?

Alcoholism can affect you physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically.

#### **Physical symptoms include:**

- Being unable to limit the amount you drink
- Feeling a strong craving or urge to drink
- Developing a tolerance for alcohol so you need more to feel its effect
- Slurred speech
- Poor coordination
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms including nausea, sweating, rapid heartbeat, shaking

#### **Emotional or psychological symptoms include:**

- Unstable moods
- Impaired judgement
- Inappropriate behavior
- Impaired attention or memory
- Blackouts where you don't remember events
- Failing to fulfill obligations at work or home
- Giving up social and work activities
- Using alcohol in situations where it's not safe

#### **Alcoholism can lead to:**

- Accidents at work
- Motor vehicle accidents and other injuries
- Relationship problems
- Legal or financial problems
- Problems with other substance use
- Increased risk of suicide or attempted suicide

#### **Long term effects can include:**

- Liver disease
- Digestive problems
- Heart problems
- Eye problems
- Neurological complications
- Increased risk of cancer

### Where can you turn for support?

In addition to a health care professional, you can seek support from a trusted friend, colleague or family member. Your union or HR rep can provide referrals, including financial resources. National and local resources are available to both the individual and to those offering support, and include:

- SAMHSA Substance Use Treatment Locator – <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment> – 1-800-662-4357
- NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator – <https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov>

You can find links to self-diagnostic tools at [btshelp.org/alcoholuse](https://btshelp.org/alcoholuse)