



# ALCOHOL PROBLEM?

## Identify Early Warning Signs

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**Glenbeigh**  
ACMC Healthcare System

An affiliate of

 **Cleveland Clinic**

# Do I Have a Problem With Alcohol?

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If you are asking yourself this question you may already be abusing, or be dependent on, alcohol. You should know you are not alone. The first step is recognizing the early warning signs and learning if your use of alcohol is problematic. Alcohol can be deadly. You should not try to detox alone. Seek help from your doctor or an accredited treatment center specializing in addiction.



## What You Should Know

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The clinical term for problem drinking is "Alcohol Use Disorder." It is a disease that can impact your health and livelihood in negative ways. More alcohol is being consumed at home as people working from home have access to alcohol and are drinking more during the day.



Alcohol withdrawals are serious, may cause seizures, and possibly lead to death. As drinking progresses, you may experience increased physical dependence to, and withdrawals from, alcohol.



Alcohol addiction can spiral out of control quickly or take years to manifest. Everyone is different but abuse can lead to addiction.



With proper treatment, you can learn to live without alcohol. A recovery program can help you build a fulfilling life.

# Early Warning Signs

Alcohol issues can begin at any age. Like any other disease, if left untreated, alcohol use can lead to significant health problems or death. This general guide offers insights into the warning signs of a possible alcohol use disorder.

## 01 Loss of Control



You drink more, or longer, than you intend. You try to cut down or stop drinking. You think about when you can have that next drink or experience cravings. You spend a lot of time being sick from drinking.

## 02 Risk Taking



Once, or more than once, you've been in a dangerous situation such as drinking and driving or using heavy machinery. You may have had unsafe sex while drinking.

## 03 Physical Illness



You may experience dizziness, shakiness, slurred speech, sweating, lack of coordination, tremors, nausea, vomiting or blackouts.

## 04 Isolation



People annoy you when they express concern about your drinking. As a result, you prefer to drink alone. Alcohol use affects everyone around you, including your loved ones.

## 05 Denial



You still go to work and take care of family. You tell yourself the beer isn't as strong, which is why you need more to get the same feeling. A drink in the morning clears brain fog.

## 06 Intense Emotions



You may experience fear, anxiety, euphoria, guilt, aggression or agitation. You may be compulsive, have mood swings or be self-destructive.

## 07 Weight Gain



Weight gain can be caused by alcohol. It may also be a sign of health issues associated with drinking.

# What do I do now?

If you think you have a problem with alcohol you can reach out for help. Talk to a professional with experience in treating alcohol use disorder. To begin, you may be asked a series of questions, called a "screening." Below are some questions The National Institutes of Health suggests to get started with the process of identifying an alcohol issue.



## Screening Questions

- T** Tolerance: How many drinks does it take to make you feel high?
- A** Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- C** Have you ever felt you ought to cut down on your drinking?
- E** Eye opener: Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

The T-ACE is valuable for identifying range of use based on the DSM-III-R criteria. A score of 2 or more is considered positive. "Yes" answers to questions A, C or E = 1 point. Reporting tolerance to more than two drinks = 2 points.

## Take Action

- P** Pick up the phone and talk to an experienced professional. Many of our specialists have been there, understand and can help.
- S** Screen. You will be asked more questions about your drinking and how it is effecting your life.
- O** Options. Learn how you can stop drinking and if it can be done with minimal disruption to your life.
- E** Enjoy life again. You can experience a new life in recovery that is fun and fulfilling.

## Call 1-800-234-1001

for a free phone assessment, which is a conversation with a specialist to talk about your concerns. You will have the option to learn more about alcohol use disorder and treatment options.

**Open 24/7**

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