

Addiction Impacts Millions

Addiction, or substance use disorder, is a chronic, complex brain disease affecting about 21 million (1 in 7) Americans.¹ Addiction compels people to seek drugs despite negative consequences and creates intense cravings for the addictive drug. This craving overrides other needs, including the need to care for your self, your infant, or your relationships with others. Addiction changes how you think and behave.



Addiction is a disease. Like other diseases, it has symptoms.

Symptoms of Addiction

People may take drugs to feel good, to relieve stress, to perform better, or because of curiosity or peer pressure.² But repeated use can lead to addiction and being unable to stop. There are four categories of symptoms of addiction:

- Impaired control: a craving to use the substance; desire or inability to reduce or control substance use.
- Social problems: failure to complete major tasks at work, school, or home; social, work, or leisure activities are given up or cut back because of substance use.
- Risky use: the substance is used in risky settings; use continues despite known problems.
- Drug effects: tolerance (need for larger amounts to get the same effect); withdrawal symptoms (different for each substance).²

If you're concerned about you or someone else, get help at [findtreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov).

Addiction—What Is It? How Can I Stop It?

Preventing Addiction

Addiction is a powerful disease, but it is preventable. In fact, the National Institute on Drug Abuse says preventing drug misuse and addiction during adolescence is the best strategy for tackling addiction.³

And everyone has a role to play in prevention, whether you're a parent, teacher, community leader, health professional, volunteer, student, or a family grieving the loss of a loved one. At Prevention Action Alliance, we're building a world where every community has access to high-quality prevention resources and where everyone knows the role they play. If you want to become part of building that world, join us at preventionactionalliance.org/join.



About Us

Prevention Action Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit in Columbus, Ohio that is dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. Learn more about Prevention Action Alliance at preventionactionalliance.org.

Prevention
Action Alliance

1. "Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health." U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-generals-report.pdf>.
2. "What Is Addiction." American Psychiatric Association. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/addiction/what-is-addiction>.
3. "Preventing Drug Misuse and Addiction: The Best Strategy." National Institute on Drug Abuse. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/preventing-drug-misuse-addiction-best-strategy>

