Alcoholism

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/alcoholism.html

Also called: Alcohol dependence

For most adults, moderate alcohol use is probably not harmful. However, about 18 million adult Americans are alcoholics or have alcohol problems. Alcoholism is a disease with four main features:

- Craving - a strong need to drink
- Loss of control - not being able to stop drinking once you've started
- Physical dependence - withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating, or shakiness when you don't drink
- Tolerance - the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to feel the same effect

Alcoholism carries many serious dangers. Heavy drinking can increase the risk of certain cancers. It can cause damage to the liver, brain, and other organs. Drinking during pregnancy can harm your baby. Alcoholism also increases the risk of death from car crashes, injuries, homicide, and suicide.

If you want to stop drinking, there is help. Start by talking to your health care provider. Medicines, counseling, and support groups may help you to stop drinking.

NIH: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Start Here


Overviews

- Alcoholism [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/alcoholism/DS00340/METHOD=print&DSECTION=all] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Faces of Change: Do I Have a Problem with Alcohol or Drugs? [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4174/SMA12-4174.pdf] Easy-to-Read (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF

Latest News


**Treatment**
• Alcohol and Drug Treatment: How It Works, and How It Can Help You [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA07-4292/SMA07-4292.pdf] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF  
  Also available in Spanish [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA08-4320/SMA08-4320.pdf]  
  Also available in Spanish [http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/es/drugs-procedures-devices/prescription-medicines/naltrexone-for-alcoholism.printerview.all.html]  
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.apa.org/centrodeapoyo/alcohol.aspx]  
• What Is Substance Abuse Treatment? A Booklet for Families [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA08-4126/SMA08-4126.pdf] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF  
  Also available in Spanish [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA08-4098/SMA08-4098.pdf]

**Prevention/Screening**

**Rehabilitation/Recovery**

**Disease Management**

**Specific Conditions**
  Also available in Spanish [http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/es/diseases-conditions/alcohol-abuse/treatment/alcohol-withdrawal-syndrome.printerview.all.html]  
• Overview of Alcohol Consumption [http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption] NIH (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)

**Related Issues**
• Alcohol Poisoning [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/alcohol-poisoning/DS00861/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
• Alcohol's Effects on the Body [http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/alcohols-effects-body] NIH (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)
• Alcohol-Related Liver Disease [http://www.liverfoundation.org/abouttheliver/info/alcohol/] (American Liver Foundation)
• PTSD and Problems with Alcohol Use [http://www ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/ptsd-alcohol-use.asp] (National Center for PTSD)
  Also available in Spanish [http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/es/diseases-conditions/tobacco-addiction/treatment/smoking-cessation-in-recovering-alcoholics.printerview.all.html]
• What People Recovering from Alcoholism Need to Know about Osteoporosis [http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/bone/Osteoporosis/Conditions_Behaviors/default.asp] NIH (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases)

Health Check Tools

Tutorials
• Alcohol Use and Older Adults [http://nihseniorhealth.gov/alcoholuse/alcoholandaging/01.html] NIH (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)

Videos

Clinical Trials
• ClinicalTrials.gov: Alcohol Withdrawal Delirium [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Alcohol+Withdrawal+Delirium%22] NIH (National Institutes of Health)
• ClinicalTrials.gov: Alcohol Withdrawal Seizures [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Alcohol+Withdrawal+Seizures%22] NIH (National Institutes of Health)
• ClinicalTrials.gov: Alcoholism [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Alcoholism%22] NIH (National Institutes of Health)

Genetics
  Also available in Spanish [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/FamilySpanish/famhistspan.htm]
• Genetics of Alcohol Use Disorders [http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-
consumption/alcohol-use-disorders/genetics-alcohol-use-disorders] NIH (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)

Research

Journal Articles
References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)
- Article: Ask the doctor. Is it true that women are more... [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23757786?tool=MedlinePlus]

Directories
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator [http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Organizations
- Al-Anon/Alateen [http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/] (Alateen, Al-Anon)
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/alamspan.html]
- Alcoholics Anonymous [http://www.aa.org/]
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.aa.org/sp_index.cfm?Media=PlayFlash]

Newsletters/Print Publications

Law and Policy
- Are You in Recovery from Alcohol or Drug Problems? Know Your Rights [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/PHD1091/PHD1091.pdf] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) - PDF

Statistics
- Adults Having Five or More Alcoholic Beverages in 1 Day [http://www.cdc.gov/features/ds5drinks1day/] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- CDC Vital Signs: Binge Drinking [http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/BingeDrinking/] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
MedlinePlus Magazine


Teenagers


Men

- Excessive Alcohol Use and Risks to Men's Health [http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/mens-health.htm] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Women

- Excessive Alcohol Use and Risks to Women's Health [http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/womens-health.htm] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Seniors

- Alcohol Use and Older Adults [http://nihseniorhealth.gov/alcoholuse/alcoholandaging/01.html] NIHSeniorHealth (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)

Patient Handouts

Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000944.htm]
Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000944.htm]

Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000523.htm]

Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000494.htm]

Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000503.htm]

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You may also be interested in these related MedlinePlus topics:


The primary NIH organization for research on Alcoholism is the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/]

Alcoholism - Multiple Languages [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/languages/alcoholism.html]

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