

Substance Misuse: Signs, Symptoms, Effects and Risks

The first step to recovery from substance misuse is recognising that you have a problem and deciding to get help and make a change!

What is substance use?

Substance use is any consumption of alcohol or drugs and may not lead to a problem, abuse or dependency in some people. Substance misuse is when someone continues to use drugs or alcohol even when it causes problems, such as trouble with work, family, or their health.

Examples of substances include alcohol, tobacco (nicotine), cannabis, heroin, cocaine and ecstasy, and some prescribed medicines.



The potential effects of regular substance use include

- Damage to organs, such as the heart, brain, liver and diseases, such as heart disease, HIV, cancer.
- Development of other mental illnesses.
- Permanent changes to hormonal or nervous systems.
- Damage to social network or relationships.
- Loss of job or other financial issues.
- Legal troubles.

Signs of risky substance use

- Practical and emotional problems in everyday life.
- Increasing use over time.
- Prioritising substance use.
- Feeling reliant on and out of control without the substance.



Who is most at risk to become addicted to drugs or alcohol?

Those who are most at risk of developing addiction include people who have :

- A genetic predisposition to addiction.
- Previous addiction problems.
- Mental health disorders.
- Early experimentation with drugs or alcohol.
- Regularly used or misused highly addictive substances.
- A family history of addiction.
- Poor social support.
- Peers that use drugs and/or encourage drug use.
- Lack of familial involvement.
- A history of trauma or other stressors.
- Easy access to substances.
- More addictive methods of use, such as inhaling or injecting substances.

Seeking Help

If alcohol, tobacco or drugs are affecting your health and wellbeing and you want to do something about it, there are various support and treatment options available. These include:

- Individual therapy, group therapy or a combination of both
- Social support groups
- Medically assisted treatment programs
- Residential treatment, outpatient treatment or a combination of both
- Medical detox services

Reaching Out?

iCALL :

Call : 9152987821 Email : icall@tiss.edu
Available Monday–Saturday, 8 AM–10 PM.

Sangath :

Call : +91 95525 30557

National Tobacco Quit Line Service :

Call 1800112356 or give a missed call at 011-22901701

National Drug De-addiction Helpline Number :

Call : 1800-11-0031

Samaritans Mumbai :

Call : +91 84229 84528, +91 84229 84529,
or +91 84229 84530

Email : talk2samaritans@gmail.com

Fortis Stress Helpline :

Call 9144428921 Available 24x7.

Spandan :

Call 9630899002 Available 24x7.

Source drugabuse.gov, sunrisehouse.com, psychguides.com