

Alcoholism

Alcoholism is a chronic disease, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), characterized by symptoms including craving, loss of control, physical dependence, and tolerance. Almost one in twelve U.S. adults -- 17.6 million people -- abuse alcohol or are alcohol dependent, reports the NIAAA website (updated in 2007).

The 5 Types of Alcoholics, Courtesy of Clinical Psychologist Dr. Michelle Golland

1. **Young Adult:**
This accounts for 32% of alcoholics. The average age is 24 years old. They tend to binge drink and not seek help for alcohol issues.
2. **Young Antisocial:**
This accounts for 21% of alcoholics. The average age is 26, and over half have antisocial personality disorder. They tend to use multiple drugs.
3. **Functional:**
This accounts for 19% of alcoholics. They are middle-aged and tend to be in stable relationships, and have higher education and higher incomes than other alcoholics. They tend to drink every other day and consume more than five drinks on drinking days.
4. **Intermediate Familial:**
This accounts for 19% of alcoholics. They are middle-aged and have a family history of alcohol abuse. Nearly 50% are clinically depressed and 20% have bipolar disorder.
5. **Chronic Severe Type:**
This accounts for 9% of alcoholics. They are middle-aged with an early onset of drinking. They are the most prone to psychiatric problems and drug abuse issues. This group is the most likely to receive treatment for their alcohol dependency.

More men than women are dependent on alcohol, according to the NIAAA, and adults between the ages of 18-29 suffer most. But alcoholism affects a vast demographic. "As a clinical psychologist, I can tell you alcohol and drug addiction knows no race, class, or gender. Any person, even a loving and devoted mother, can struggle with alcohol dependency," says Dr. Golland.

What Moms Can Do about Alcoholism

Jennifer Ginsberg, MSW, MAJCS, and addiction specialist, weighs in with Alcoholism and Addiction: A Resource Guide for Moms:

This guide has been prepared for moms who think they may have a problem with alcohol or addiction, or have someone in their life that they think might have a problem.

Drug and alcohol addiction doesn't discriminate -- it affects men, women, teens, adults, and people of all races and backgrounds. Women, and particularly mothers, are especially vulnerable to the psychological effects of substance abuse, as they often feel immense shame about the impact of their drinking or using on their families.

The number of moms abusing drugs and alcohol has steadily risen in the past decade. Between balancing all the responsibilities associated with motherhood, women are under tremendous stress and pressure. Women tend to develop addictions more easily, and are more prone to depression than their male counterparts.

Do You (or Does Someone You Love) Have a Problem?

Answer these short "yes" or "no" questions to see if you might need help.

1. Do you use alcohol or other drugs to build self-confidence?
Yes -- No
2. Do you ever drink or get high immediately after you have a problem at home, work, or school?
Yes -- No
3. Have you ever missed work or school due to alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No
4. Does it bother you if someone says that you use too much alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No
5. Have you started hanging out with a heavy drinking or drug-using crowd?
Yes -- No
6. Are alcohol and other drugs affecting your reputation?
Yes -- No
7. Do you feel guilty or bummed out after using alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No
8. Do you feel more at ease on a date or social event when drinking or using other drugs?
Yes -- No
9. Have you gotten into trouble at home, work, or school for using alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No
10. Do you borrow money or "do without" other things to buy alcohol and other drugs?
Yes -- No
11. Do you feel a sense of power when you use alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No

12. Have you lost friends since you started using alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No
13. Do your friends use less alcohol or other drugs than you do?
Yes -- No
14. Do you drink or use other drugs until your supply is all gone?
Yes -- No
15. Do you ever wake up and wonder what happened the night before?
Yes -- No
16. Have you ever been arrested or hospitalized due to alcohol or use of illicit drugs?
Yes -- No
17. Do you "turn off" or avoid studies or lectures about alcohol or illicit drug use?
Yes -- No
18. Have you ever tried to quit using or to cut back on alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No
19. Has there ever been someone in your family with a drinking or other drug problem?
Yes -- No
20. Could you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs?
Yes -- No

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, you may have a problem with alcohol or drugs.

Where to Get Help

Many people who are struggling with substance abuse find support in 12-step support groups, which provide immediate solutions and comfort to those who believe they may have a problem. These groups are nonsectarian, apolitical, available in every community, and require no dues or fees to attend. The following websites are available to provide you with more specific information, and can help you locate a group in your area.

For those who believe they may have a problem with alcohol: <http://www.aa.org>

For those who believe they may have a problem with drugs: <http://www.na.org/>

For those who believe they may have a problem with marijuana: <http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org/>

For those who are concerned about a friend or family member that may have a problem: <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/>

Connect with Other Moms about Alcoholism

momlogic

Join the conversation:

- [Hidden Alcoholism and a Family Denial](#)
- [What Should His Punishment Be? "Man Throws 10 Mo Old Into a Pot of Boiling Water..."](#)
- [What Do You Think about This??](#)

Related Momlogic Stories on Alcoholism

1. [I Am a Mom and I Am an Alcoholic](#)
2. [Cocktails with Your Kids?](#)
3. [Diane Schuler Was Not a Bad Mom](#)

Additional Resources for Alcoholism

- [MedlinePlus](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)
- [National Institute On Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#)