

For your health

Responsible Alcohol Consumption: When Enough is Enough

Learn how to recognize a drinking problem and where to turn for help

Not all alcohol abusers look or act alike. Nor do they start on the road to alcoholism the same way or share the same set of problems. What they have in common is that they are all, in some way, damaging their lives.

Alcohol: When enough is enough

There are many ways to be diagnosed as being alcohol dependent. Alcohol abusers often show at least one of these danger signs:

- Tolerance: The need to drink increasingly greater amounts to get the same effects (the same high or buzz).
- Withdrawal: Symptoms, ranging from mild hangovers with nausea and headache to severe shaking, that develop soon after drinking stops and can continue for several days.
- Loss of control: The inability to control drinking behavior and having obsessive thoughts about drinking.

Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of subsidiary companies. The Aetna companies that offer, underwrite or administer benefits coverage include: Aetna Health Inc., Aetna Health of California Inc., Aetna Health of the Carolinas Inc., Aetna Health of Illinois Inc., Aetna Health Insurance Company of New York, Aetna Health Insurance Company and/or Aetna Life Insurance Company (Aetna).

Reprinted with permission from Aetna IntelliHealth® and Harvard Medical School (www.intelihealth.com). Medical content reviewed by the Faculty of Harvard Medical School. Copyright 1996 - 2008.

Additional information is available on Aetna's consumer health information website located at www.intelihealth.com.

This information is for informational purposes only, is not medical advice and is not intended to be a substitute for proper medical care provided by a physician. Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change. For more information about Aetna plans, refer to www.aetna.com.

- Concern by others: Problems reported by coworkers or friends.
- Health, family and legal problems: Examples include repeated injuries, driving citations and chronic lateness.

Many alcoholics are high achievers who work every day. It isn't always easy to detect an alcohol abuser by how much or how often the person drinks.

Risk factors and resources

According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, about 18 million Americans drink too much alcohol. The likelihood of developing a drinking problem depends on several factors:

- Psychiatric disorders. Such disorders, especially anxiety and depression, may make a person more vulnerable to addiction, or the relaxing effects of alcohol simply may take the edge off a highly anxious person.
- Family history. Alcoholism often has a genetic basis, though environment also plays a significant role.
- Age. The younger a person is when they first experience alcohol intoxication, the higher the risk of later developing alcoholism.

At Aetna, we believe there is nothing more important than your health. That's why we're pleased to bring you information to help you take an active role in the management of your health.

Despite the tremendous hardships caused by alcoholism, many people do achieve recovery and long-term stability. If you or someone you know has a problem with alcohol, don't wait, seek help today. Alcoholism can have medical consequences and may be associated with psychiatric disorders. You may want to start with a call to your family doctor. He or she can give you a medical evaluation, treatment information, and refer you to community services that can help. Or you can contact your state agency responsible for overseeing alcohol- and drug-treatment programs. One of the oldest recovery programs, Alcoholics Anonymous, meets in many towns and communities across the country.

Visit Aetna Navigator® online at www.aetna.com

Aetna Navigator is an online member self-service website available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use it to perform common transactions involving your Aetna medical, dental, prescription drug or flexible spending account (FSA) plans. You can send an online message to Aetna Member Services, access claims, coverage, and general health information as well as decision-support tools. Log in to Aetna Navigator at www.aetna.com.

We want you to know®



www.aetna.com

©2008 Aetna Inc.