



How can I tell if someone has a drug ADDICTION??

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, people are considered **ADDICTED** if they experience **3 or more** of the following:

Loss of Control — over taking a drug.

At times, people who are addicted wind up using a drug even when they don't want to or weren't planning to.

Obsessive Thoughts — People who are addicted spend a LOT of time thinking about things like **HOW** they're going to get the next dose, **WHEN** they're going to get it, and **WHERE** they are going to use it.

Continued Abuse in Spite of Serious Consequences — such as getting poor grades, losing a job, or being dumped by friends.

Dependence — When a person's body is so used to a drug, it needs or craves it in order to feel good. There are 2 kinds of dependence:

- **Physical Dependence:** When the body's cells are so used to a drug that they need it in order to feel normal.
- **Psychological Dependence:** When people believe they need a drug to feel good emotionally.

Withdrawal — Occurs when addicts suddenly stop taking the drug. Can include headaches, dizziness, vomiting, cold sweats, shakiness, anxiety, irritability, or depression. Sounds like fun...right? Wrong!



Tolerance — This occurs when body or brain cells become so used to getting a drug that the person needs to keep increasing the amount in order to get the same effects.



Increasing the amounts of a drug can lead to **OVERDOSE!** OVERDOSE means taking too much of a drug causing severe mental confusion, convulsions, coma, and sometimes even



Where can people get help for a drug problem?

By looking in the **phone book** under “Alcoholism,” “Drug Abuse,” “Substance Abuse Services,” or “Hot Lines/Help Lines,” you can find the names of specific agencies or people in your area who can help. The listings may include:

Self-Help Groups:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) — for people who are addicted to alcohol and want to stop
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA) — for people dependent on other drugs who want to stop
- Al-Anon — for family members and friends who are concerned about another person’s alcohol use
- Alateen — for kids 12 and over affected by a parent or other family member’s drinking

Others Who Can Help: Counselors at your school.....as well as specifically trained physicians, clergy, psychiatrists, and psychologists.

Drug use is **SERIOUS** business. And learning to recover from an addiction can involve lots of professionals, hard work, and **TIME**.

If anyone you know shares concern about his or her own drug use, the most caring thing you can do (even if you have been sworn to secrecy) is to tell an adult you trust.

Drug Treatment Centers —

They focus on treating people with drug problems.

Hospitals — They can treat people as inpatients or outpatients.

Public Health Agencies —

They specialize in making referrals for help.

Halfway Houses — They offer residential treatment (including housing) for those with drug problems.

Mental Health Centers — They focus on the underlying problems that lead to drug addiction.

More About Drugs With Dr. DQ



Dear Dr. DQ:
What's the difference
between prescription (Rx)
and Over-the-Counter
(OTC) medicines?

Signed, Wondering

Dear Wondering,

Rx drugs need a doctor's note (a prescription) which names the patient, the drug, how much to take, and when or how often to take it. A patient then gives the prescription to a pharmacist who "fills" it according to the doctor's orders. **OTC** drugs include things like aspirin, vitamins, cough medicine, and nose drops. These can be purchased right off the store shelf. Directions for using OTC drugs are printed on the packages, & additional detailed information is provided inside.

Note: Since not all people react to drugs the same way, and some may even be allergic to them, it is always smart to check with a doctor first. Before taking **ANY** medicines, it's also important to get your parent or guardian's permission.

Signed, Dr. DQ

Dear Dr. DQ,
What is the difference
between drugs people
buy at a store and drugs
which are sold on the
street?

Signed, Unsure



Dear Unsure,

Rx and OTC medications sold in stores are legal. That means they've either been approved by or are overseen by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Ingredients are listed on the container, and buyers know exactly what they're getting. "Street Drugs," on the other hand, are **ILLEGAL** and can be especially dangerous as they often are **NOT** what the buyer thinks. Unless they're sent to a lab, there's no way of knowing for sure how pure or strong they are. And even testing can't predict how they will affect an individual user! If that's not bad enough, "Street Drugs" often contain additional mood-altering chemicals...sometimes even poisons.

Signed, Dr. DQ

continued...

Questions continued...



Dear Dr. DQ,
Why do people take
mood-altering drugs in
the first place?
Signed, Puzzled

Dear Puzzled,

There are many reasons why people use mood-altering drugs...

...to be cool, to rebel, to celebrate, to feel grown up, to relax, to escape, to forget problems, to belong to a group, to change their feelings, because of peer pressure, because they're bored, because they're curious, because their friends do, because they like the feeling, because they have low self-esteem, or because they are addicted.

But there are LOTS of better alternatives.

If you're unhappy or bored, it's okay to want to change your feelings. It's just that using drugs to do so is unpredictable and potentially dangerous physically, emotionally, legally. (Remember, no one starts out saying, "I want to take this so I can become an addict.")

If you're wired and stressed out, ride a bike, take a hike, talk with a friend, take a bubble bath, write a poem, or listen to your favorite music.

If you're feeling tired and bored, take a nap or a brisk shower, read an interesting book, play fast music. Best of all, try doing something nice for someone else.

If you're hurt and angry, cry, draw a picture about your feelings, talk about it with someone you trust, or do something physical, like playing the drums, jogging, or shooting hoops.

GET THE IDEA?

YOU are in control of how you respond to your feelings.

If you don't like them, **CHANGE THEM.**

Just make sure you do so safely,
WITHOUT the use of drugs.
Because once you decide
to let drugs do the job for you,
YOU are no longer in control.....
the drugs are !!

Signed, Dr. DQ





Acknowledgements

The Drug Quiz Show gratefully acknowledges
The Howard L. Green Foundation, Inc.
for making possible the creation of this Learning Center.

Special thanks also go to the following individuals for their
dedication, expertise and assistance:

- Concept:** Mattie Bicknell, Prevention Educator
- Content:** Mattie Bicknell, Prevention Educator
William Beals, M.D.
Certified by The American Society of Addiction Medicine
Linda Shapess, Teacher Trainer New York Health Central
Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES
Valerie Stedman, M.S., Health Educator
Christian Brothers Academy
Patricia Schramm, M.S., Alcohol and Drug Abuse
Prevention Education Program, Syracuse Diocesan Schools
Susan Meidenbauer, Executive Director
The Drug Quiz Show
Bridget Musto, Syracuse, NY
Emily Meidenbauer, Manlius, NY
Debrah Shulman, Ph.D., Prevention Educator
President of The Drug Quiz Show
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Michael Nerney and Associates
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Westhill Central School District
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