

Alcoholism Treatment Center in Arizona

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What is Alcoholism (Alcohol Addiction)?



Alcoholism is a progressive, chronic, and incurable illness afflicting 17 million adults and nearly 1 million adolescents between the ages of 12-17. If left untreated, alcohol use disorder can cause severe and negative consequences in the lives of addicts and their families. In some cases, alcohol abuse can even be fatal.

Not all alcoholics are the same. There are often misconceptions and stereotypes of an alcoholic. The term also carries a stigma; after all, who wants to be labeled as an alcoholic? While there are some chronic alcoholics who drink day and night, often descending into institutions and homelessness, most alcoholics are functioning in society, holding jobs, going to school, and raising families.

How is Alcohol Addictive

The following are major signs of alcohol use disorder:

- An obsession, preoccupation, or anticipation with opportunities to drink (i.e. Looking forward to 5 o'clock, or to the weekend to drink)
- Inability to control drinking. (i.e. Loss of control over how much alcohol one drinks, or lack of control/predictability regarding how long one can remain abstinent)
- Attempts to control drinking (i.e. Trying to limit one's number of drinks, swearing off alcohol, only drinking at certain times, and switching from liquor to beer or wine)
- Repeated unsuccessful attempts to quit
- Continued use, despite negative consequences (i.e. Legal, financial, marriage/family, occupational, health, etc.)
- Others in your life (family, friends, co-workers) have commented on their alcohol use

- Health/medical issues related to alcohol use (i.e. Brain damage, liver disease, gastrointestinal problems, etc.)
- Experiencing blackouts, or memory loss, due to drinking
- Drinking and driving, or having a designated driver
- Higher tolerance (i.e. More alcohol is required to achieve the same effect)
- Withdrawal symptoms from alcohol (i.e. shaking, sweating, hallucinating, etc.)
- There are many varying types and patterns of alcohol use. Some experiment, or may drink recreationally or socially. Others become dependent or addicted.

Signs of Alcohol Addiction

Alcohol is one of the addictive substances known to man. As with other substances, alcohol use affects the areas of the brain associated with dopamine, a neurotransmitter controlling the brain's reward and pleasure centers.

Those suffering from alcohol use disorder experience a defect in this system of the brain, causing cravings and compulsions to drink, which often override one's sense of values, reason, and judgment. This is one reason some continue to drink, despite having suffered consequences related to the behavior. There are neurobiological forces in play, which diminish the ability to sufficiently access and affect memory in the parts of the brain which govern choice. For some, this phenomenon of craving can be overwhelming. It results in behavior which can be immoral, or even illegal; but fundamentally, the cause of alcohol use is more about biology than morality.

There are also aspects of emotional and psychological dependence related to alcohol use. For many, it becomes a coping mechanism. It can start as an unhealthy solution to life's challenges; a solution that, for some, becomes a serious problem. For reasons beyond physiology, some become dependent upon alcohol to cope, manage, and survive. Even though alcohol use has caused negative consequences, the relief received from drinking can also create cravings and compulsions to drink. Others struggle with depression, anxiety, or other co-occurring issues. For those with dual diagnosis challenges, alcohol becomes a form of self-medication; even though it typically worsens the condition.

Loss of control

This is the marker for when someone has crossed the line. Some can't control how much they drink, once they start. Others can quit drinking for periods of time (whether for days, months or sometimes even years), but they invariably return to drinking; often in the most casual of ways. And then there are those who just can't quit drinking...period.

Cross addiction

It is not uncommon for cross-addiction to occur during periods of abstinence from alcohol. This involves substituting other substances or addictive behaviors (gambling, overeating, workaholism, etc.) for alcohol use.

The "Dry Drunk"

This is a term used to explain the condition alcohol users experience when not drinking. Oftentimes, during periods of abstinence, the person may continue to struggle mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and functionally. "Dry Drunk" describes the condition of struggling with the underlying causes of alcoholism without getting the relief from the substance. This is often characterized by anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, agitation, stress, irritability, etc.

Alcoholism Treatment and Recovery in Arizona

Treatment, or rehab, for alcohol use disorder is not unlike treatment for other substance use disorders...

Alcohol Detox

This is the first step in recovery. Many will experience withdrawal symptoms, which are not easy to endure without support and structure. For some, this will require medical detox, as alcohol withdrawals can be life threatening for chronic users.

Alcohol Rehab & Counseling

Individual, group and family therapy can help those seeking recovery to identify, address, and overcome the underlying issues related to alcohol use. In most cases, if the root causes of alcoholism are addressed and dealt with, quality of life suffers, and sobriety is uncertain.

For some, rehab is necessary to help develop the tools and skills necessary for sobriety. Many need more intensive therapy and counseling to motivate and empower recovery. Models often include 12 steps, SMART recovery, cognitive-behavioral, attachment, and motivational strategies, among others.

Additionally, treatment can provide the crucial social and community resources to promote recovery. Alcoholism thrives in isolation, while recovery occurs in connection.

Alcoholism Recovery Center in Arizona

If you or a loved one are **suffering from Alcoholism**, it's time to take *steps toward recovery*, don't let alcohol control your life. **Renaissance Recovery Center** is located in Arizona and *fosters healing through Gospel-centered programs and treatment*. Many conditions are **covered by insurance under mental health provisions**. Contact us for a **free consultation** at **(480) 725-8215**.

