

Combining Alcohol and Drug Use

renaissancerecoverycenter.com/combining-alcohol-and-drug-use



What happens when you mix drugs and alcohol?

Alcohol and drugs used together often lead to the need for emergency medical treatment. Both illicit street drugs and prescription drugs, especially pain medications and stimulants, are widely used with alcohol in the United States. There are health and safety risks in abusing just alcohol or a strong drug without mixing the two. But combining alcohol and drug use can be dangerous. Even some drugs that may seem harmless when taken with alcohol can lead to serious health consequences, even death.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the U.S.

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) and drug addiction, clinically known as substance use disorder (SUD) are both medical conditions. They are both characterized by persistent use of the addictive agent even when the user knows about and perhaps even experiences its damaging effects.

A 2019 estimate reportedly indicates that 15 million people in the U.S. struggle with AUD. A 2022 report indicated that over 20 million have SUD. That number includes over 400,000 minors aged 12 to 17.

It's further estimated that nearly a million people in the country die due to alcohol abuse and related effects each year. Nearly 107 thousand died of a drug overdose in 2021, according to a report by the U.S. National Institute of Health (NIH). Combined these deaths represent one of the top causes of preventable premature death in the country.

Drugs Often Used with Alcohol

These are some of the most common types of drugs used in combination with alcohol, with often very serious health and safety consequences, sometimes including death:

- Benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax)
- Opioids (Oxycontin, Vicodin)
- Barbiturates (Percocet)
- Methamphetamine
- Amphetamines (Adderall, Ritalin)
- Cocaine

Drugs for addiction treatment, like methadone and suboxone, are also often used by people who drink alcohol in combination with these, which is a serious health risk.

The Effects of Combining Alcohol with Other Drugs

The precise signs and symptoms of combining alcohol with other drugs depends on the specific drug(s) mixed with the alcohol. For example, using alcohol with amphetamines can generate different signs of abuse in the user than combining alcohol with barbiturates or opioids. However, there are some general signs and symptoms that are relatively common to overdose of alcohol and drug mixtures. For example, mixing alcohol with other drugs can cause:

- Loss of physical coordination
- Unusual speech
- Poor judgment
- Falling
- Emotional changes
- Extreme changes in behavior
- Serious changes in breathing
- Cold and clammy skin
- Confusion
- Respiratory arrest (breathing stopped)
- Low blood pressure
- Serious changes in heart rate
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Unconsciousness
- Coma

Dangers of Mixing Alcohol and Drugs

The risk of overdosing is greatly increased when alcohol and certain drugs are combined. Even though it might not seem potentially harmful to take a pill or two and enjoy a few drinks, it can be a very serious mistake. For example, you should not drink any alcohol if

you are being treated for a physical or mental health condition and are taking:

- Blood pressure medicine
- Acetaminophen
- Nitrates
- Anxiety medications
- ADHD medications
- Antibiotics
- Other prescription drugs
- Other nonprescription drugs

Best Alcohol and Drug Recovery Help in Utah – Renaissance

Renaissance provides highly effective outpatient treatment for alcohol and drug addiction. Our team of addiction treatment professionals provides comprehensive rehab programs tailored to meet each client's personal needs and minimize the risk of relapse. Feel free to call us anytime 24/7.

If you need help with alcohol and/or drug addiction, call us at Renaissance Recovery Center at (480) 526-7738, or reach us here online today.
