

# Signs and Symptoms of Addiction in Families

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Drug addiction, or substance use disorder (SUD), affects the brain and ultimately causes the addicted person to be unable to control their use of the substance. The SUD often starts with casual use of alcohol or recreational drugs and increases in frequency. With prescription drugs, it may begin with misusing one's own or another person's medication and then needing increased dosages to keep getting a high sensation.

When users find themselves having increasing difficulty living without the drug, they may need help from a doctor, support group, or SUD treatment program to overcome the addiction and avoid relapse. Here's some information on [identifying drug addiction](#) and getting effective help:

## Frequently Abused Addictive Drugs

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These are among the most frequently abused legal and illegal drugs. The negative signs and symptoms of drug use or intoxication vary depending on which substance you use. For these popular

- Cocaine, methamphetamine, and other stimulants
  - Excessive energy, restlessness
  - Irritability, anxiety, paranoia, aggression
  - Heart rate and blood pressure changes
  - Damage to the mucous membrane in the nose
  - Oral sores, tooth decay, gum disease
  - Depression after the high

- Opioid painkillers
  - Reduced awareness of people and things around you
  - Sense of agitation
  - Attention and memory problems
  - Loss of coordination
  - Feelings of depression
  - Constipation
- Club drugs (MDMA, GHB, and others)
  - Hallucinations
  - Paranoia
  - Muscle cramps
  - Memory issues
  - Partial loss of consciousness
  - Altered heart rate and blood pressure
- Marijuana and other cannabis drugs:
  - Impaired coordination
  - Slowed reaction time
  - Trouble focusing or remembering
  - Anxiety, paranoia
  - Strong food cravings
- Barbiturates, benzodiazepines, and hypnotics:
  - Impaired coordination
  - Falls or accidents
  - Irritability or mood changes
  - Memory problems
  - Dizziness
  - Slowed breathing

## **Symptoms of Substance Addiction You May Experience**

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Some symptoms of drug addiction common to most or all of the above types of frequently abused drugs include these, among others:

- Feeling of need to use the drug routinely
- A need to use increasing amounts of the drug to feel the same effect
- Using the drug over a longer period than originally intended
- Extreme urges to use the drug that make it seem impossible to focus
- Prioritizing obtaining the drug and avoiding running out of it
- Falling behind in job duties and other responsibilities
- Loss of interest in previously favorite recreational activities
- Continuing to take the drug, although you know it's harming you physically and psychologically and your life is deteriorating because of it
- Buying the drug, even when you can't afford it
- Avoiding social activities, preferring to spend time using the drug
- Putting yourself and others at risk while high on the drug, such as driving while under the influence

- Unsuccessful attempts to stop taking the drug due to intense cravings
- Spending a lot of time trying to obtain the drug, or using the drug, or recovering from its effects
- Behaving in uncharacteristic ways, such as lying, stealing, etc.
- Withdrawal symptoms when trying to quit using the drug

## Recognizing Signs of Addiction in a Family Member

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It may be easy to confuse normal mood changes and effects of job- or school-related stress, or non-drug-related depression from SUD symptoms. But, if multiple symptoms listed below persist over a prolonged period and worsen, those are potential indicators of a family member with drug addiction. These symptoms should be addressed as soon as possible to get timely, appropriate treatment for your loved one:

- Missing many days at work or school
- Declining performance at work or school
- Deficient energy
- Loss of motivation
- Weight gain or loss
- Increasingly poor grooming habits
- Avoiding telling where they go when with friends
- Extreme behavior changes with friends and family
- Asking to borrow money without any plausible explanation
- Money or items of value are missing or stolen

## When Should You See an Expert?

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If you cannot control your use of a drug and it's causing difficulties in your life, you should seek help from your doctor, mental health professional, or an addiction treatment program. Getting help as early as possible increases your potential for a more easily sustainable recovery. If you prefer, you can contact a drug addiction hotline for guidance on how to deal with drug addiction and referrals for treatment options in your area.

## When to Get Emergency Help

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If you or a friend or family member has taken a drug and is exhibiting one of the following conditions, they may have overdosed. You should contact emergency services immediately for medical assistance if you or someone close to you:

- Is having difficulty breathing.
- Is having convulsions or seizures.
- Is partially or fully unconscious.
- Is having chest pain or pressure or other possible heart attack symptoms.
- Is exhibiting any other concerning physical reaction to the drug.
- Is exhibiting any other concerning mental or psychological reaction to the drug.

## **For SUD Treatment – Renaissance Recovery Center**

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Renaissance Recovery Center in Gilbert, Arizona, is an outpatient drug and alcohol addiction treatment facility. Our rehab services utilize social support and problem-solving in a comfortable outpatient setting.

**If you or a loved one needs treatment for SUD, call Renaissance Ranch Recovery Center at (480) 725-8215, or contact us here on our website to find out how we can help.**

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