

# Alcohol use disorder: The struggle with alcohol use disorder and paths to healing.

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## Abstract

**Alcohol use disorder, also known as alcoholism, is a chronic and progressive disease characterized by the excessive and compulsive consumption of alcohol despite its negative consequences. Alcohol use disorder is a major public health concern worldwide, with an estimated 14.5 million adults in the United States suffering from the disorder. Alcohol use disorder can have a significant impact on a person's physical, mental, and social well-being. It can lead to liver damage, heart disease, gastrointestinal problems, and neurological disorders. Additionally, it can also result in depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues, as well as problems with relationships, work, and other areas of life.**

**Keywords:** Alcohol use disorder, Counseling, Cognitive-behavioral therapy, Treatment.

## Introduction

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) outlines 11 symptoms of alcohol use disorder. If a person meets two or more of these criteria within a 12-month period, they may be diagnosed with alcohol use disorder. The 11 symptoms include: Consuming more alcohol than intended, Having a strong desire or craving to drink alcohol, Spending a significant amount of time obtaining, using, or recovering from the effects of alcohol, Failing to fulfill major obligations at work, school, or home due to alcohol use, Continuing to drink despite causing or exacerbating physical or mental health problems, Giving up important social, occupational, or recreational activities due to alcohol use, Drinking in hazardous situations, such as while driving or operating machinery, Continuing to drink despite causing or exacerbating interpersonal problems, Developing a tolerance to alcohol, requiring more alcohol to achieve the desired effect, Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when alcohol use is discontinued or reduced, Drinking larger amounts of alcohol over a longer period than intended [1,2].

The treatment of alcohol use disorder depends on the severity of the condition. Mild to moderate cases may be treated with counseling, support groups, and medication. More severe cases may require inpatient treatment or hospitalization. Counseling can help individuals with alcohol use disorder understand and address the underlying causes of their drinking, as well as develop coping strategies to prevent relapse. Some common forms of counseling for alcohol use disorder include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing, and family therapy, Support Groups: Support

groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals with alcohol use disorder to share their experiences, gain encouragement, and learn coping strategies from others who have gone through similar experiences, Medication: Several medications have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat alcohol use disorder [3,4].

These medications work by reducing the desire to drink, reducing the severity of withdrawal symptoms, or making alcohol consumption less enjoyable, Inpatient Treatment: Inpatient treatment involves a person staying in a specialized facility for a period of time to receive intensive treatment and support. This type of treatment is often recommended for individuals with severe alcohol use disorder or those who have experienced multiple failed attempts at treatment, Hospitalization: Hospitalization may be necessary for individuals with severe alcohol use disorder who are experiencing medical complications related to their drinking. This type of treatment involves close medical monitoring and may include detoxification and medication management. The best way to prevent alcohol use disorder is to avoid or limit alcohol consumption [5].

## Conclusion

Individuals who have a family history of alcoholism or who have experienced traumatic events or high levels of stress may be at higher risk for developing alcohol use disorder and should be particularly vigilant about their alcohol use. Other prevention strategies include: Seeking support from friends and family, Developing healthy coping mechanisms for stress and difficult emotions, avoiding situations where alcohol use

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is prevalent or encouraged, Seeking professional help for mental health issues. Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in children is a serious problem that can have long-term consequences. It is defined as a pattern of drinking those results in harm to the child's physical, mental, or social health. Children who develop AUD typically begin drinking at a young age and consume larger quantities of alcohol than is appropriate for their age or body size. There are several factors that can contribute to the development of AUD in children, including genetics, environmental factors, and early exposure to alcohol. Children who have a family history of AUD or who grow up in households where alcohol is readily available are more likely to develop the disorder. Children, who are exposed to alcohol at a young age, whether through family gatherings or social events, are also at higher risk.

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