

# Alcoholism

We were unable to identify an authoritative, non-copyrighted article on alcoholism. However, an excellent article on alcoholism prepared by A.D.A.M., Inc. for the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health is available for free on-line viewing at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000944.htm>.

To obtain a free copy of the present document, go to [www.masterdocs.com](http://www.masterdocs.com).

Alcoholism has a technical medical definition but essentially means consuming so much alcohol that it interferes with your physical health, mental health, or your personal/occupational responsibilities.

People with the severe form (alcohol dependence) show tolerance (increased amount of alcohol required for the desired effect) and withdrawal (problems when alcohol is discontinued).

Alcoholism is a type of drug addiction. Alcohol affects the central nervous system as a depressant. It can reduce tension and inhibitions, cause changes in behavior, poor motor skills, and unclear thinking, can irritate the gastrointestinal tract, cause nutritional deficiencies, damage the liver, damage the heart (although small amounts of alcohol may protect the heart), damage nerves, cause memory loss, increase the risk of certain cancers, cause fetal alcohol syndrome, and cause sexual dysfunction. Alcoholism is associated with increased unemployment, domestic violence, and traffic deaths. About 15% of people in the United States are problem drinkers.

The following questions are used by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to screen for alcohol abuse or dependence:

- Have you felt that you should cut down on your drinking?
- Do you ever drive when you have been drinking?
- Is someone in your family concerned about your drinking?
- Have you ever had any blackouts after drinking?
- Have you ever been absent from work or lost a job because of drinking?
- Do you have to drink more than before to achieve intoxication or the desired effect?

Alcoholics Anonymous is a self-help group of recovering alcoholics that offers emotional support and an effective model of abstinence for people recovering from alcohol dependence. There are more than 1 million members worldwide, and local chapters are found throughout the United States. Al-Anon, Alateen, SMART recovery, LifeRing recovery, SOS, Women For Sobriety, and Moderation Management can also help.

**The following information relates to the article on alcoholism at the above website:**

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