

When Drinking Become Alcoholism

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When people drink too much, with time they risk becoming addicted to alcohol. This is called alcoholism, or alcohol dependence. It's a disease, and it can happen at any age. Common signs include:

- **Craving** . . . a strong need or urge to drink
- **Loss of control** . . . not being able to stop or cut down drinking
- **Not feeling well after heavy drinking** . . . upset stomach, sweating, shakiness, or nervousness
- **A need to drink more** . . . to get the same effect as before
- **Neglecting activities** . . . giving up or cutting back on other activities
- **Continuing to drink** . . . even though alcohol is causing problems

It may be hard to imagine why people with alcoholism can't just use a little willpower to stop drinking. But the addiction creates an uncontrollable need for alcohol. It can be as strong as the need for food and water. People may want to stop because they know that drinking harms their health and their loved ones. But quitting is extremely difficult.

Although some people are able to recover from alcoholism without help, many need assistance. With treatment and support, many stop drinking and rebuild their lives.

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