

# Talking to Your Healthcare Provider About Alcohol Dependence

Your feelings about alcohol and your drinking may be complicated, and you probably have questions. If you think you may need help, or just want more information, this discussion guide may offer some ideas to start a conversation with your healthcare provider.

## Alcohol Dependence

- What is alcohol dependence?
- Is alcohol dependence a disease?
- What are some of the symptoms of alcohol dependence?
- What are some of the warning signs of alcohol dependence?
- How might alcohol dependence affect other aspects of my health (now or over time)?

## Risk Factors for Alcohol Dependence

- Is alcohol dependence genetic?
- Are there any health conditions or factors that make someone more likely to develop alcohol dependence?
- Are there other factors that may put me at risk for alcohol dependence?

## Diagnosis

- How is alcohol dependence diagnosed?
- Are there different severities of alcohol dependence?
- Is it still alcohol dependence if I've been able to stop drinking for periods of time (a week, a month) but then started again?

## Treatment Options for Alcohol Dependence

- If I have alcohol dependence, what are my treatment options?
- Will I experience withdrawal symptoms if/when I stop drinking?
- What types of medications are available for the treatment of alcohol dependence?
- Should I consider support groups, counseling, or any other behavioral therapy options?
- If I decide to seek treatment, are there other changes (such as lifestyle changes) that I should consider that could support me on my journey?
- What kind of services do you offer (inpatient, outpatient, detox/withdrawal management, counseling, etc.)?
- How long will I need to stay on a treatment?
- What are the chances that I can reduce or stop my drinking?
- What happens when alcohol dependence is not treated?
- How do I pay for treatment? Will my insurance cover it?
- What if I start drinking again?

## Additional Questions

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