



ALCOHOL

Did you know?

Alcohol is a depressant/downer. Depressants slow down the functions of the body and the brain for the period you are intoxicated.

Signs of use

The following behaviours may indicate that someone is under the influence of Alcohol

- Lowering of inhibitions and poor judgement.
- Talking louder than usual and a change in mood can occur.
- Slurred speech, slow or clumsy movements, swaying, dropping objects (e.g. money, keys) or forgetting thoughts in mid-sentence.
- Glassy, red eyes and the smell of Alcohol on one's breath.
- With longer term use drinkers get a redness under the skin especially in the face. This is known as "phuzu" face which is an isiZulu word for beer face.

Dangers with chronic or heavy use

The long-term overuse of Alcohol is capable of damaging nearly every organ and system in the body, and it is associated with increased risk of addiction. Alcohol slowly poisons the liver and the end result is often malnutrition, chronic pancreatitis, liver disease and cancer. In addition, damage to the central nervous system and peripheral nervous system can occur from chronic Alcohol abuse. In time the person may become increasingly depressed and suffer from low energy and motivation. If a person does not seek treatment, they may become suicidal and life starts to feel meaningless. In some cases the use of Alcohol spurs on aggressive behaviour and domestic violence. Unfortunately chronic overuse of Alcohol may deplete important chemicals in the brain. This leads to confusion, short term memory problems (Korsakoff's syndrome) and eventually early onset of dementia (a degenerative brain disease).

Should I stop drinking?

If some of the following applies to you, you should seek professional help to stop the use of Alcohol:

- You have tried to cut down before but have not been successful.
- You suffer from morning shakes or nausea after a heavy drinking spree.
- If you cannot stop drinking once you taste Alcohol (loss of control).
- You gradually drink more and more to get the same effect.
- Family, friends and colleagues are concerned about your drinking.
- You spend most of your time buying, drinking, hiding Alcohol or thinking about it.

It is also important to stop the use of Alcohol when:

- You have high blood pressure or liver disease.
- You are taking medicine that reacts with Alcohol.
- You are pregnant or planning to conceive.
- You suffer from a mental health condition such as depression, bi-polar mood disorder, anxiety or schizophrenia.
- You have been addicted to another substance such as Cannabis or medication (because cross addiction can take place).
- You have family members who are addicted to Alcohol, medication, drugs, gambling, sex, food, shopping, exercise, internet, work, etc. (Addiction is a disease of the brain and can be genetic).

Withdrawal symptoms

When a person uses Alcohol moderately there should not be any withdrawal symptoms. However an alcoholic may experience unpleasant symptoms after a heavy drinking session. Nausea, sweating, shakiness, anxiety, a rapid heartbeat and increased blood pressure occur when Alcohol use is stopped.

Treatment

There is always hope if you struggle with addiction.

Please contact Elim Clinic on 011 975 2951 or on marketing@elimclin.co.za to find out more about treatment. You can also visit our website on www.elimclin.co.za for more information.



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