

# Managing Your Health: Substance Abuse

A Guide to Awareness, Prevention, and Recovery

## Let's Talk About It

Many people use alcohol, prescription medications, or other substances for a variety of reasons—relaxation, sleep, pain relief, or simply out of habit. But sometimes, use becomes more frequent or harder to control. That's when use can turn into abuse. And over time, abuse can develop into addiction.

Addiction affects millions of people—and it's more common than many realize. It can impact your health, relationships, and everyday life. But addiction isn't about willpower—it's a chronic condition that changes how the brain works. From alcohol and tobacco to prescription drugs and other substances, substance abuse can take many forms. The good news? Support and healing are possible.

## What is Substance Abuse?

Substance abuse (also called substance use disorder) is a condition that involves the repeated use of drugs or alcohol—even when it causes problems with your health, relationships, or daily life.

It's not a character flaw or a moral failure. Addiction develops over time and is influenced by brain chemistry, genetics, mental health, and environment.

## Common Signs of a Problem

- Difficulty stopping or controlling use
- Needing more to get the same effect
- Strong cravings or urges to use
- Withdrawal symptoms when not using
- Avoiding responsibilities at home or work
- Social withdrawal or strained relationships
- Health issues related to use

## Commonly Abused Substances

- Alcohol—The most common substance use disorder in the U.S.
- Tobacco and Nicotine—Highly addictive and harmful to heart and lung health
- Prescription Drugs—including opioids, sedatives, and stimulants

## Getting Help

Recovery starts with a conversation.

If you or someone you care about may be struggling with substance use, tell your primary care provider. Together, you can develop a care plan that meets you where you are.

Treatment may include:

- Counseling or therapy
- Medication-assisted treatment
- Support groups like AA or NA
- Medical care to manage withdrawal and cravings

## Need Help Now?

Substance Abuse National Helpline

**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

Free, confidential help available 24/7

**Call or text 988**

Support for substance use or emotional crisis—anytime

For other support and resources, visit [Live and Work Well](#).

## Learn More About Alcohol and Aging

Watch this short video: [Short Takes with National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\): What Should Older Adults Know About Alcohol?](#)

## You're Not Alone

Substance abuse is treatable—and recovery is possible. Whether you're taking the first step for yourself or reaching out to support someone else, take the step toward a healthier future.

*This guide is for reference purposes only. Always consult with your medical provider for personalized advice and recommendations regarding your specific health condition.*

Call Member Services at 713-442-4878 (TTY: 711). From October 1 through March 31, hours are 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week. From April 1 through September 30, hours are 8 am to 8 pm, Monday through Friday. Messaging services are used on weekends, after hours, and on federal holidays. KelseyCare Advantage, a product of KS Plan Administrators, LLC, is an HMO and POS Medicare Advantage plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in KelseyCare Advantage depends on contract renewal. © 2025 KelseyCare Advantage. All rights reserved. H0332\_FLYDISST-SBUSE25\_C