

# Substance Abuse and Dependence



## What is **substance abuse**?

Substance abuse is the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs. This can include the abuse of illegal drugs.

## What are the **signs of substance abuse**?

- You do not care about your duties at school, work or home when you use.
- You make poor choices while high.
- Your substance use leads to legal trouble.
- Your substance use ruins relationships.

## What are the **symptoms of substance abuse**?

- Bloodshot eyes or pupils that are smaller or larger than normal
- Frequent nosebleeds
- Strange body odor
- Shakes
- Slurred speech

## Do you have health questions?

Call our 24-hour Nurse Advice Line. We are here to help you.

English: **(888) 275-8750** Español: **(866) 648-3537** TTY/TDD: **711**

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- Sudden weight gain or loss
- Mood changes
- Sudden changes in friends or hobbies
- Seeming fearful, withdrawn or nervous
- Complaints from work or school

## What is **substance dependence**?

When you abuse a substance, you can become dependent. Dependence occurs when your body adapts to the substance. Your body needs more of the substance to feel the same effect (tolerance). You may have physical or mental health problems if you stop taking the substance (withdrawal).

**Substance abuse can lead to heart attacks, kidney damage, seizures, mental disorders or sudden death.**

**Call your provider if you think you suffer from substance abuse. You can recover!**