



SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS¹

Someone who frequently uses drugs or alcohol despite continued negative consequences may have a substance use disorder.

Substance use disorder often requires treatment from health care providers. It can involve both psychological and physical dependence.

If someone you know displays one or more of the following behaviours, they may be experiencing a substance use disorder:

- Constant cravings for substances
- Spending a lot of time seeking out substances
- Using higher doses of a substance to get the same effect (tolerance)
- Not being able to stop using a substance or reduce its consumption
- Continuing to use a substance despite the consequences:
 - Negative health effects
 - Difficulty meeting their obligations at work or school
 - Social or family problems
 - Failure to perform important activities
 - Significant changes in behaviour and mood

ADVICE FOR MANAGING YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE²

- Drink water when you're **thirsty**. **Alcohol won't quench your thirst.**
- Before drinking alcohol, **eat** something so your stomach is full and your body absorbs alcohol more slowly.
- Drink **from a glass (always the same glass)**, not a bottle. You'll likely consume more if you drink straight from the bottle.
- When you're drinking, **alternate** alcoholic beverages and non-alcoholic beverages or **dilute** your alcohol with water or juice.
- Set a **limit** for how many glasses you'll drink **and stick to it**.
- **Never mix** alcohol and drugs.
- When you're tired, stressed or worried, choose **not to drink**.
- If you want to reduce your alcohol intake, **change your habits!** Instead of drinking, try cooking a favourite meal, going for a walk, taking a bath, etc.
- If you drink mainly at home, keep a limited amount of alcohol on hand. Only buy what you plan to consume in the immediate future. If you're in isolation, ask a friend to go to the store for you.
- Choose **low-alcohol** beverages, like beer instead of wine.
- **Track your consumption**. Keep a log of your alcohol intake for several weeks.
- If you have one, keep writing in your **recovery journal**.

1 <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/about-problematic-substance-use.html>

2 <https://aide-alcool.be/conseils-de-consommation> (French only)



During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may have trouble accessing alcohol. Stores that sell alcoholic beverages may have limited hours or reduced staff. They may also only take delivery orders or refuse to accept cash.

IMPORTANT

Under the current circumstances, it is best to prioritize methods that mitigate the negative consequences of consumption. If someone decides that they want to stop consuming a substance, it is strongly recommended that they consult a health professional.

IF YOU LIVE WITH OTHERS

- **Never force someone to drink** if they don't want to.
- Never force yourself to drink just because those around you are. **Saying no is a sign of strength, not weakness.** Simply say that you are cutting back on your alcohol intake.
- **Let others know** if you feel their alcohol consumption is getting out of hand, and ask them to do the same for you. If someone starts overdoing it, don't encourage them to drink more.
- Try drinking **non-alcoholic mocktails**.
- **Never share** your glasses/bottles with others.

DRINK IN MODERATION

For **women**, moderate drinking means no more than **10 drinks per week**, with no more than **2 drinks per day**.

For **men**, moderate drinking means no more than **15 drinks per week**, with no more than **3 drinks per day**.

Plan one or two non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit.

RESOURCES

Knowing Your Limits With Alcohol

A practical guide to assessing your drinking created by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction https://ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-08/CCSA-Knowing-Your-Limits-with-Alcohol-Guide-2019-en_0.pdf

Alternalcohol – Mocktail recipes (non-alcoholic cocktails) <https://alternalcohol.com/beverages>

Educ'alcool <https://educalcoool.qc.ca/en/home/>



ADVICE FOR DRUG USERS³

- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If you do not have soap, you can use **hand sanitizer**.
- When you change locations, wash your hands after you arrive and before you leave.
- After you use a tissue, **throw it out** in a trash can and wash your hands.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow.
- **Never share drug** paraphernalia (cigarettes, pipes, syringes, bottles, etc.).
- Prepare your drugs yourself and **make sure not to touch** other people's drugs or paraphernalia.
- If you inject substances, try to do it yourself—if you need help, **avoid direct contact** with the person and try to stay at least two metres away from them.
- **Reduce** your consumption to **avoid an overdose**.
- **Be prepared** to avoid going into withdrawal in case the substance you consume is no longer available.

IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY BEING TREATED FOR OPIOID ADDICTION (METHADONE, SUBOXONE, ETC.)

You may be able to receive more unsupervised doses during isolation—check with your doctor or pharmacist/nurse at your health centre.

IMPORTANT

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RESOURCES

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – *Advice and Preventive Measures for Drug Users and the Homeless*, a publication by the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2019/19-210-27WA.pdf>

3 <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2019/19-210-27W.pdf>



KEEP YOUR MIND OFF SUBSTANCES

Now is a great time to take care of yourself and realign your priorities. It's a good idea to find activities that can keep your mind off substances.

Here are a few ideas:

- Do a favourite hobby
- Read a book
- Record your thoughts and feelings in a journal
- Draw, paint, or do a craft
- Have a Facetime or Skype call with your friends
- Dance in your living room
- Cook and swap recipes
- Go for a walk
- Take some time to check in with your family and tell them you love them
- Set goals for the day/week

Social media

Avoid spending too much time on social media. Reading the news on social media can sometimes be very stressful, and some ads can encourage the consumption of substances. It's a good idea to limit the amount of time you spend on social media.

Budgeting

Get in the habit of tracking what you spend on substances. Think about your consumption and its place in your life. Using substances is expensive!

With the public health crisis we're going through, it's especially important to manage your spending and prioritize your family's basic needs.