**What about the after-effects?**

One of the main problems associated with using alcohol to deal with anxiety and depression is that people may feel much worse when the initial effects have worn off. This can lead some people to drink more, to ward off these difficult feelings, and a dangerous cycle of dependence can develop.

Relational problems are a frequent and sometimes extremely severe result of the addiction to alcohol. The problems occur within families. Also, frequently, the person is virtually disabled with regard to work.

We must note also that alcohol addiction is not only a problem of men but affects large numbers of women.

**Getting Help**

Advice, information and counseling services often are the first point of contact for someone concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. People can ring or call in for information or advice, mainly the provision of counseling. Our treatment approach is eclectic, meaning that we do not adhere to one treatment philosophy but borrow from a range of approaches appropriate to the needs of the client. Cognitive and behavioral models are referred to together with a client-centered approach. The cognitive model recognizes that problem drinking is a learnt activity and therefore people can learn alternative ways of responding to problems, whether those problems are immediate or come from experience from the past, and drinking cues. Behavioral models recognize the individual as being able to take responsibility for his/her own actions rather than being controlled by alcohol. These approaches are in contrast to the disease model where drinking problems are seen as inevitable in those with a pre-disposition to alcohol problems or addiction.

Get help for yourself or someone you know. Do you care about alcohol misuse? Are you professionally or personally interested in reducing alcohol-related harm? If so - contact us or someone in your area now!

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**Alcohol**



Alcohol has been produced and consumed for around 4,000 years and has played a major role in the social, economic and cultural life of the recent world. However, it is frequently misused, leading to problems with health, to physical and psychological dependency, and to severe relational problems.

**The impact of alcohol on health:**

Alcohol harms health through three mechanisms:

* acute intoxicating effects,
* chronic toxic effects, following prolonged periods of drinking at harmful levels
* propensity for addiction leading to physical and psychological dependency.

The immediate intoxicating effects of alcohol - reduced inhibitions, impaired judgment, slurred speech, and nausea/vomiting, for example - are often easily identifiable; however the longer-term health consequences of excessive drinking, despite their serious and potentially deadly nature, may remain undetected. Studies have shown that alcohol is linked to more than 60 different medical conditions including:

* Cancer - alcohol is one of the most well-established causes of cancer. particularly breast and colon cancer and cancers of the mouth and throat. A recent Europe-wide study of over 350,000 people found that one in 10 of all cancers in men and one in 33 in women were caused by past or current alcohol intake;
* Liver cirrhosis - the final stage of alcoholic liver disease;
* Pancreatitis and stomach problems;
* High blood pressure and increased risk of stroke and heart disease;
* Mental health issues - there is a link between drinking too much alcohol and a number of mental health problems. Persistent heavy drinking can also be associated with memory loss difficulties;
* Drinking too much, too often, leads to social and relationship problems.

**Alcohol and mental health**

Mental health problems not only result from drinking too much alcohol. They can also cause people to drink too much.

Put very simply, a major reason for drinking alcohol is to change our mood - or change our mental state. Alcohol can temporarily alleviate problems. But it can make existing mental health problems worse.

Evidence shows that people who consume high amounts of alcohol are vulnerable to higher levels of psychological problems and it can be a contributory factor in some mental illnesses, such as depression.

**How does drinking affect our moods and mental health?**

When we have alcohol in our blood, our mood changes, and our behavior then also changes. At first, alcohol leads to happiness and lessening of inhibitions. Later, it leads to depression. This change depends on how much we drink and how quickly we drink it.

Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, and this can make us less inhibited in our behavior. It can also help ‘numb’ our emotions, so we can avoid difficult issues in our lives.

Alcohol can also reveal or magnify our underlying feelings. This is one of the reasons that many people become angry or aggressive when drinking. If our underlying feelings are of anxiety, anger or unhappiness, then alcohol can magnify them.