

never too late to talk to your family, your caseworker, or someone you trust. Your life is in danger if you ignore the problem.

In an emergency, please call 911.

**For more information please visit:**

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

[www.stopalcoholabuse.gov](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov)

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## Drug and Alcohol Abuse



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Using drugs can be very harmful to your health, family, and community. This brochure helps you to identify a friend or family member who may be abusing drugs or alcohol, and how you can help.

## **WHAT ARE DRUGS?**

Drugs are substances that change the normal functioning of the body. They damage your health and can be addictive.

Common types of drugs are:

- cigarettes.
- alcohol.
- chewing tobacco or khat.
- marijuana.
- cocaine.
- methamphetamines.

## **WHAT IS DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE?**

People who abuse drugs or alcohol need it too much on a regular basis. They can be so dependent on alcohol or drugs that they are not able to function without it. They cannot stop themselves and it becomes a sickness. This can be very harmful to their body, relationships with family and friends, and their job.

## **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE?**

People may have an alcohol problem if they:

- get drunk often,
- get sick with alcohol,
- have more than one drink a day,
- hurt themselves or others when drinking,
- forget what they did when they were drinking, or
- lie or try to hide their drinking.

## **WHAT IS NORMAL?**

It is normal to have one drink a day. It is not normal to drink if it is used to avoid thinking about unpleasant or sad events. People who drink too much can become abusive, irresponsible, violent, angry, and are unable to make good decisions for themselves or their family. This is not normal.

## **WHAT IS THE LAW?**

It is illegal in the United States to smoke under the age of 18, and to drink under the age of 21. It is against the law to drink and drive.

## **IS SUBSTANCE ABUSE HARMFUL TO THE BODY AND MIND?**

Drinking alcohol and abusing drugs can affect the brain and the ability to function properly. Alcohol and drugs can harm the body and may lead to serious illnesses such as cancer, liver disease, coma, or even death. A person with substance abuse has a higher chance of committing crimes.

Alcohol and drug abuse can lead a person to make bad decisions such as:

- driving when drunk
- being violent
- overspending money on drugs and alcohol and falling into debt
- having sex without protection

## **WHAT CAN I DO IF SOMEONE I KNOW IS DRINKING TOO MUCH OR USING DRUGS?**

If you or someone you know has this problem, it is important to stop and get help. To ask for assistance in finding help call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 1-800-662-4357. The calls are free, and they can help find a local treatment program. It is