**Warning Signs of Alcoholism**

By [Carol Galbicsek](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/warning-signs/#author) | Last Edited: April 6, 2021 | [7 Sources](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/warning-signs/#sources)

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What Are the Warning Signs of Alcoholism?

There are various warning signs to help detect potential [alcohol abuse](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/). While many signs are recognizable, others may be more difficult to identify. Also, the severity of alcohol abuse may play a role in the warning signs a person exhibits. For example, some people try to cover their alcohol abuse by drinking in private and isolating themselves from others. This makes it challenging for family members or friends to intervene and help their loved one.

Mild alcohol abuse can be easily overlooked. However, what may appear as a minor issue can turn dangerous over time. These early warning signs should not be ignored. Seeking treatment sooner rather than later will allow you to get back to the things you enjoy most in life.

Common Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse

If left untreated, alcohol abuse can spiral out of control quickly. When alcohol abuse begins to negatively impact a person’s life and causes harm, it is diagnosed as alcohol use disorder (AUD). Recognizing the [warning signs](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/warning-signs/) of alcohol abuse and getting proper treatment can make a significant difference in someone’s recovery process.

While there is no exact formula to determining whether or not someone is an alcoholic, symptoms often co-occur. One symptom may snowball into another, fueling additional problems down the road.

Some of the most common symptoms of alcohol abuse are:

* Experiencing temporary blackouts or short-term memory loss
* Exhibiting signs of irritability and extreme mood swings
* Making excuses for drinking such as to relax, deal with stress or feel normal
* Choosing drinking over other responsibilities and obligations
* Becoming isolated and distant from friends and family members
* Drinking alone or in secrecy
* Feeling hungover when not drinking
* Changing appearance and group of acquaintances you hang out with

No matter how minor a drinking problem may seem, alcohol abuse symptoms should not be ignored. If you or a loved one is struggling with alcoholism, we’re here to help. [Give us a call now](tel:8664177091) to find alcohol treatment facilities nearby.

Recognizing Alcoholism

There are several screening tools that help with determining whether someone has alcoholism. One tool is known as CAGE – a questionnaire that measures the severity of a drinking problem. If you answer “yes” to two or more CAGE questions, you should seek professional medical assistance.

The four CAGE screening questions are:

1. Have you ever felt you should cut down on your drinking?
2. Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get over a hangover?

Oftentimes, a medical professional may also ask you questions from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) to properly diagnose alcohol abuse. Answers to these questions should be based on the past year of alcohol use. Questions include:

* Have you continued to drink even though it was making you feel depressed or anxious or adding to another health problem?
* Have there been situations where you ended up drinking much more than you intended?
* Have you lost interest in other activities and hobbies since you started drinking?
* Have you experienced symptoms associated with an alcohol withdrawal?
* Have you felt an urge or craving to consume alcohol?
* Have you gotten into situations while drinking that increased your chances of harming yourself or others (i.e., drinking and driving)?
* Have you been in trouble with the law due to alcohol-related problems?

The CAGE is a brief questionnaire that you can take to help determine if you have a problem with alcohol. Any negative consequences in just one area of your life, regardless of how much or how often you drink, are cause for concern and an indication that you need the help of a professional.

**James Garbutt, MD**  
(pulled from Everday Health)

The Dangers of Alcoholism

Alcohol abuse can lead to an array of [issues](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/effects/), affecting both your personal and professional life. Prolonged drinking puts you at risk for developing serious health complications and can cause other potentially life-threatening consequences.

Denial is one of the main reasons why millions of people do not receive treatment for alcoholism. Some individuals will try to rationalize their drinking behaviors. For instance, you may blame other people or certain circumstances for your drinking. Rather than acknowledge the problems you’ve experienced from alcohol, you become defensive when someone mentions your excessive drinking pattern. By refusing to recognize the negative consequences of alcohol, you’re preventing yourself from living a healthy, sober life.

It’s time to stop making excuses for your drinking and get the help you deserve. Learn about [alcoholism support options](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/support/) and find other[resources](https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/resources/) to start on your recovery plan today.