

Alcohol and Substance Use During COVID-19

Feeling scared, sad, depressed, anxious and alone is normal at this time. Some may cope with these strong feelings and stress by increasing their use of commercial tobacco, alcohol, and/or other substances. Teens, in particular, may be at risk for substance use to deal with isolation from friends, boredom, and stress.

Alcohol and/or substance use can make COVID-19 illness more serious

Alcohol and other substance use can:

- weaken the heart, lungs and other important organs
- weaken the body's ability to fight diseases
- negatively affect sleep
- increase anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues.

All of this wears a body down, making it easier to get sick.

Inhalants weaken the lungs. This is true whether someone is smoking, vaping, using e-cigarettes, or any other way inhalants enter the body, including second-hand smoke.

If you are in recovery or struggling with substance use:

Know that this is a stressful time, and it is ok to feel anxious, concerned or worried about staying sober.

Reach out to your healthcare provider and any sponsors or loved ones.

Connect with virtual treatment and recovery programs.

Write a list of your contacts. Share that list with someone you trust.

Take medicine as prescribed and continue therapy, treatment, or support appointments when possible.

Do things that boost mental health and wellness. For some ideas, see "Staying Safe and Mentally Well During COVID-19."

Get immediate help in a crisis.

- Call 911
- Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990, or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)



To help someone in recovery or who struggles with alcohol or substance use:

Check in to see how they are and remind them that they are loved and supported.

Find ways to help them deal with their stress. Encourage them to use alternative ways to deal with stress and strong feelings during this difficult time.

Connect with them by phone, video, or brief meetings while wearing masks and keeping social distance.

Help connect them to virtual treatments, recovery programs, and support groups.

If soap and water are available for handwashing, consider removing or limiting hand sanitizer in the home.

Be aware of difficulty with recovery during this time.

- Social isolation, added stress and emotions, and changes in routine can trigger use.
- Health care services may be limited, including treatment, testing, peer-support groups, syringe service programs, and access to naloxone.



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For more information:
drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/comorbidity/covid-19-resources