

How Do I Know I'm an Addict?

There is no single question that answers this

- Addiction is not about how much you use, how often, or even whether you can stop for a while. It is about the relationship you have with a substance or behavior — and whether that relationship is causing harm you keep returning to.
- Only a qualified professional can diagnose a substance use disorder. This guide is meant to help you decide whether to seek an honest assessment.
- If you are also having thoughts of suicide, reach out now: call or text 988. Addiction and suicidal thinking often travel together, and you deserve support for both.

Signs that suggest a problem, not just a habit

- You said you would stop or cut back, and you couldn't — or you could, but only for a short time.
- You need more of the substance to get the same effect, or you feel sick, anxious, or irritable when you don't use.
- You spend a lot of time getting, using, or recovering from the substance.
- You neglect things that used to matter: work, school, relationships, health, money, hobbies.
- You use in situations that are physically dangerous, or you keep using despite clear consequences.
- You feel preoccupied with the next time you'll be able to use.
- You hide your use, lie about it, or feel shame that makes you withdraw from people.

The question behind the question

- Many people asking "Am I an addict?" are really asking: "Is this my fault?" or "Is this bad enough to need help?"
- The answer to the first question is no. Addiction is a treatable health condition, not a moral failure.
- The answer to the second question is simpler than it feels: if a substance or behavior is hurting you and you can't reliably stop, it is bad enough to look into.
- You do not have to lose everything before you are allowed to get help.

A few questions to sit with honestly

- Have I tried to quit or cut down more than once?
- Do I use to cope with sadness, anxiety, anger, loneliness, or trauma?
- Has anyone expressed concern about my use?

- Have I broken promises, missed obligations, or taken risks because of it?
- Do I feel like I need it to feel normal, have fun, or face the day?
- Do I keep using even though I know it makes my mental or physical health worse?
- A "yes" to several of these does not seal a diagnosis, but it is a strong signal to talk to a professional.

What to do with the answer

- If you think you might have a problem, you have already done the hardest part: looking at it directly.
- Call SAMHSA's free, confidential helpline: 1-800-662-4357 (24/7). They will listen and help you find local options.
- Visit findtreatment.gov to search for providers by location, payment type, and service.
- Tell your primary care doctor or a therapist. They have this conversation regularly and will not be shocked.
- Do not try to detox from alcohol or benzodiazepines alone — withdrawal can be dangerous. Get medical guidance.

You are not the problem; you are a person with a problem

- Addiction changes the brain's reward and stress systems. Wanting to stop and not being able to is a symptom of the condition, not proof of weak will.
- Recovery is common. Millions of people have rebuilt their lives, and many say the hardest day was the day they admitted it out loud.
- You don't have to figure out the whole path tonight. One honest conversation is enough to start.

**If you are in
danger right
now**

Call or text **988** for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. If there is immediate danger, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room.

This guide is educational information only. It is not medical, psychiatric, or crisis advice. If you are thinking about hurting yourself, contact 988 or 911 now.

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