

Recognizing the Changes that Come with Alcohol Addiction

You suspect a friend or family member may be abusing alcohol. You want to help, but you're not sure where to begin. Alcoholism is a disease and it's not always easy to tell that a loved one has a drinking problem. Here are some signs to watch out for.

Have you noticed changes in the way your loved one takes care of themselves? Are they showering, shaving, washing their clothes? Have they lost or gained weight suddenly? A loved one addicted to alcohol may not eat a healthy diet which can cause extreme thinness, hair loss or thinning and dark circles under their eyes. They may also crave high-fat foods which can lead to weight gain.

Have you noticed redness in their face, especially their nose and cheeks? Alcohol can enlarge blood vessels causing redness in the face. Does your friend or family member have unexplained bruises and cuts? Alcohol abuse can cause clotting issues which makes them more likely to bruise. Do they seem to have accidents?

Does your loved one have trouble sleeping? Shakiness? Restlessness? Nausea? Tremors? Or Seizures? These symptoms can happen when a person is going through alcohol withdrawal.

Are they happy one minute and sad the next? Are they irritable? Aggressive? Violent? Depressed? Does a friend or family member make poor decisions? Engage in risky behaviors such as unsafe sex or drinking and driving?

If you notice any of these changes in your friend or family, encourage them to get help today. There are many resources available to support a loved one's recovery.

For more information, visit niaaa.nih.gov.