

Managing Your Drug and Alcohol Intake

Substance use can be social, a way to unwind, or a stress reliever. But if it starts affecting your well-being or daily life, reassessing your habits can help. Making informed choices and seeking support puts you in control of your health.

Understanding Substance Misuse: Substance misuse refers to the harmful use of drugs or alcohol for non-medical purposes. While often linked to illicit drugs, legal substances such as alcohol, prescription medication, caffeine, and nicotine can also be misused. People may use substances to relax, socialise, or cope with life's challenges. However, reliance on drugs or alcohol to manage stress or emotions can lead to long-term harm. Some substances are more addictive than others, and individual factors—such as mental health, genetics, and lifestyle—can increase the risk of dependence.

Recognising When Substance Use Becomes a Problem: Identifying a problem is the first step towards making a change.

Ask yourself:

- Do you need drugs or alcohol to start your day or get through it?
- Have friends or family expressed concern about your use?
- Do you find yourself hiding or lying about your intake?
- Have you taken risks or engaged in dangerous behaviour while under the influence?
- Are your work, relationships, or finances suffering due to substance use?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it might be time to seek support.

Seeking Support and Treatment Options: There is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing substance use. Different options may work for different people, including:

- Counselling and lifestyle changes – Speaking with a professional can help you develop coping strategies and build resilience.
- Detoxification (detox) – Medical support to safely withdraw from substances.
- Rehabilitation programs – Structured treatment in a clinic or community setting.
- Peer support groups – Connecting with others who understand the challenges of addiction.

Developing Healthy Coping Strategies: Replacing substance use with positive habits can support long-term change.

Consider:

- Practicing mindfulness and relaxation techniques to manage stress.
- Planning ahead to avoid situations that may trigger use.
- Staying active and engaged in hobbies, exercise, or social activities.
- Building a strong support network of friends and family.



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Overcoming Setbacks: Recovery is a journey, and setbacks can happen. Instead of focusing on failures:

- Identify triggers and develop strategies to manage cravings.
- Stay mindful of boredom and find fulfilling activities to stay occupied.
- Surround yourself with supportive people who respect your choices.

The Benefits of Reducing or Quitting Substance Use :

Making a change can lead to:

- Improved physical and mental health.
- Stronger relationships with family and friends.
- Better sleep, increased energy, and enhanced focus.
- Financial savings and a greater sense of control over your life.

Where to get help:

National Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotline: 1800 250 015

Alcohol and Drug Foundation: <https://adf.org.au>

References:

Lifeline: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/substance-abuse-and-addiction>

Dept. of Health, Disability and Ageing - How to reduce or quit drugs: <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/drugs/about-drugs/how-to-reduce-or-quit-drugs>

Alcohol and Drug Foundation: <https://adf.org.au/resources/druginfo/>