Cost and Privacy Issues

How will I find treatment that is affordable?

SAMHSA Locator

An online source of information about substance use and/or mental health treatment facilities in the United States

Enter a starting location:

Go

The Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides payment information for each of the treatment services listed, including information on sliding fee scales and payment assistance. You should select the “substance use facilities” section and you can enter a zip code. If you find it difficult to navigate or prefer to talk on the phone, you can call the treatment helpline at 1-800-662-4357 or 1-800-487-4889 (TTY). You can also go to the "Frequently Asked Questions" section for more information (See the question “Where can a person with no money and no insurance get treatment?”). In addition, to ask about treatment centers that offer low- or no-cost treatment, you can also contact your state behavioral health agency—many states offer help with payment for substance use treatment.
Note that the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act ensures that co-pays, deductibles, and visit limits are generally not more restrictive for mental health and substance use disorder benefits than they are for medical and surgical benefits. The Affordable Care Act builds on this law and requires coverage of mental health and substance use disorder services as one of ten essential health benefits categories. Under the essential health benefits rule, individual and small group health plans are required to comply with these parity regulations. For more information on the Affordable Care Act, you can call 1-800-318-2596 or go to https://www.healthcare.gov/.

When you research payment options, be sure you are speaking to people familiar with the new rules (old websites and pamphlets will not necessarily be accurate.)

A note on health insurance for veterans: If the person needing treatment is a veteran or is covered by health benefits for veterans, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can help you find VA services near you. Visit the VA Substance Use Disorder Program Locator to do your search.

If I seek treatment, I am worried that other people will find out. How do I keep it quiet?

You can tell your employer or friends you need to go on medical leave. If you talk to your doctor or another medical expert, privacy laws prevent them from sharing your medical information with anyone outside of the health care system without your permission. In addition, most health care providers who specialize in addiction treatment can't share your information with anyone (even other providers) without your written permission. For more information on how your private medical information is protected by law, read the HHS information on Health Information Privacy (HIPAA) and the substance use confidentiality regulations (PDF, 388KB).
In certain cases—when health professionals believe you might be a danger to yourself or to others, the provider may be able to share relevant information with family members. Here is more information on when it is appropriate for the clinician to share protected information.

**How To Recognize a Substance Use Disorder**

**How do I know if I am addicted?**

SAMHSA Locator

An online source of information about substance use and/or mental health treatment facilities in the United States

Enter a starting location:

address, city, state, or zip code

Go

If you can't stop taking a drug even if you want to, or if the urge to use drugs is too strong to control, even if you know the drug is causing harm, you might be addicted. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Do you think about drugs a lot?
2. Did you ever try to stop or cut down on your drug usage but couldn't?

3. Have you ever thought you couldn't fit in or have a good time without the use of drugs?

4. Do you ever use drugs because you are upset or angry at other people?

5. Have you ever used a drug without knowing what it was or what it would do to you?

6. Have you ever taken one drug to get over the effects of another?

7. Have you ever made mistakes at a job or at school because you were using drugs?

8. Does the thought of running out of drugs really scare you?

9. Have you ever stolen drugs or stolen to pay for drugs?

10. Have you ever been arrested or in the hospital because of your drug use?

11. Have you ever overdosed on drugs?

12. Has using drugs hurt your relationships with other people?

If the answer to some or all of these questions is yes, you might have an addiction. People from all backgrounds can get an addiction. Addiction can happen at any age, but it usually starts when a person is young. See NIDA's video, below:

**Anyone Can Become Addicted to Drugs**
Through scientific advances, we know more than ever about how drugs work in the brain. We also know that drug addiction can be successfully treated to help people stop using drugs and lead productive lives. If you think you might be addicted, seek the advice of your doctor or an addiction specialist.

Why can't I stop using drugs on my own?

Repeated drug use changes the brain, including parts of the brain that enable you to exert self-control. These and other changes can be seen clearly in brain imaging studies of people with drug addictions. These brain changes explain why quitting is so difficult, even if you feel ready. See NIDA's video, below:

Why Are Drugs So Hard to Quit?
Will they make me stop taking drugs immediately?

The first step in treatment is "detox," which helps patients remove all of the drugs from their system. This is important because drugs impair the mental abilities you need to stay in treatment. When patients first stop using drugs, they can experience a variety of physical and emotional withdrawal symptoms, including depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders; restlessness; and sleeplessness. Treatment centers are very experienced in helping you get through this process and keeping you safe. Depending on what drugs you are addicted to, there may also be medications that will make you feel a little better during drug withdrawal, which makes it easier to stop using.

What if I have been in rehab before?

This means you have already learned many of the skills needed to recover from addiction and should try it again. Relapse should not discourage you. Relapse rates with addiction are similar to rates for other chronic diseases many people live with, such as
hypertension and asthma. Treatment of chronic diseases involves changing deeply imbedded behaviors, and relapse sometimes goes with the territory—it does not mean treatment failed. A return to drug use indicates that treatment needs to be started again or adjusted, or that you might benefit from a different approach.

**People have told me I shouldn't use drugs and drive, but I feel fine when driving. Can I trust my judgment on driving?**

The most responsible thing you can do is stop driving while using drugs. This can be inconvenient, but it will show loved ones you are serious about getting better. Specific drugs act differently on the brain, but all illicit drugs and many prescription drugs impair skills necessary for the safe operation of a vehicle. These include motor skills, balance and coordination, perception, attention, reaction time, and judgment. Even small amounts of some drugs can have measurable effects on driving ability. Drugs also impact your ability to tell if you are impaired, so you should not trust your own judgment on driving until you receive an evaluation and treatment. For more, see our [DrugFacts on drugged driving](#).

If you drive for a living or need to use a vehicle in the course of your workday, you should be aware of your employer’s tools and responsibilities related to drug testing. There is a [Drug-Free Workplace Helpline](#) at 800-967-5752.
I take drugs because I feel depressed—nothing else seems to work. If I stop, I'll feel much worse—how do I deal with that?

It is very possible you need to find treatment for both depression and addiction. This is very common. It’s called "comorbidity," "co-occurrence," or "dual diagnosis" when you have more than one health problem at the same time. It is important that you discuss all of your symptoms and behaviors with your treatment team. There are many nonaddictive drugs that can help with depression or other mental health issues. Sometimes health care providers might not communicate with each other as well as they should, so you can be your own best advocate and make sure all of your health providers know about all of the health issues that concern you. People who have co-occurring issues should be treated for all of them at the same time. For more information see our DrugFacts on comorbidity.
Note: If you ever feel so depressed that you think about hurting yourself, there is a hotline you can call: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). This is called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and you can share all of your problems with them. A caring, nonjudgmental voice will be on the other end, listening.

How to Find Help

If I want help, where do I start?

Asking for help is the first important step. Visiting your doctor for a possible referral to treatment is one way to do it. You can ask if they are comfortable discussing drug use screening and treatment. If not, ask for a referral to another doctor. You can also contact an addiction specialist. There are 3,500 board-certified physicians who specialize in addiction in the United States. The American Society of Addiction Medicine website has a Find a Physician feature on its home page. You do not need a doctor’s name; simply fill out the zip code section, and it will reveal treatment experts in your area. In addition, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry also has a Patient Referral Program.
It takes a lot of courage to seek help for a drug problem because there is a lot of hard work ahead. However, treatment can work, and people recover from addiction every day. Like other chronic diseases, addiction can be managed successfully. Treatment enables people to counteract addiction's powerful, disruptive effects on brain and behavior and regain control of their lives.

**How do I find a treatment center?**

If you or your medical specialist decides you can benefit from substance use treatment, you have many options. You can look for a treatment center online at [findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov) by simply entering your zip code. If you have difficulty navigating the site or prefer to speak with someone on the phone, you can call the helpline and get some advice on how to proceed: 1-800-662-HELP (4357). This service is supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This online treatment finder will allow you to search geographically and will also give you information about the treatment center.

**Resources**

**What if I want to participate in research studies?**

- To read some general information about being a part of NIH research studies, see [NIH Clinical Trials and You](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/home).
- To search for a clinical trial that might be right for you, check out [clinicaltrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov).

**Where can I find information on specific drugs?**

- The main NIDA site has information on [specific drugs, including](https://www.drugabuse.gov/).
their effects on the body, brain, and behavior.

- NIDA also has an Easy-to-Read website with information about many drugs.

**Where can I find more information on treatment and recovery?**

More information on what to expect in treatment and recovery, check out our publication on the science behind addiction, called *Drugs, Brains, and Behavior - The Science of Addiction*, written by NIDA scientists and is based on many years of research.

There is more information on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's resource page on treatment, prevention, and recovery.

You might also want to check out the websites of some other NIH Institutes:

- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
  - Treatment for Alcohol Problems: Finding and Getting Help
- National Institute of Mental Health

**Support Groups**

**What about 12-step programs—Do they work?**

Although they are not treatment or a substitute for treatment, self-help groups like 12-step programs can be a great source of support and encouragement while a person is engaged in treatment, and after. The most well-known self-help groups are those affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Cocaine Anonymous (CA), all of which are based on the 12-step model.
Most drug addiction treatment programs encourage patients to participate in a self-help group during and after formal treatment. So long as they do not discourage participants from taking medications (which are a crucial part of treatment for opioid addiction and can be helpful in treating alcohol or nicotine addiction), these groups can be particularly helpful during recovery, as they are a source of ongoing communal support and encouragement to stay in recovery. Information on local meetings can be found on their websites. Support groups for family members of people with addictions, like Al-anon or Alateen, can also be helpful.

There are other groups in the private sector that can provide a lot of support. To find meetings in your area, contact local hospitals, treatment centers, or faith-based organizations. These organizations often coordinate support groups for substance use.

**Treatment Information**

**What do I look for in a treatment center?**

Treatment approaches must be tailored to address each patient's drug use pattern and also their drug-related medical, psychiatric, and social problems. Some treatment centers offer outpatient treatment programs, which allows you to continue to perform some of your daily responsibilities. However, some people do better in inpatient (residential) treatment. An addiction specialist can advise you about your best options. NIDA has put 30 years of research into finding general principles of drug addiction that are most effective (*NIDA's Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment*). NIDA has also developed a booklet that outlines 5 questions you can ask when looking for a treatment program. You might want to have these materials on hand when you talk to treatment centers to help you find the best treatment program for your needs.

### Components of Comprehensive Drug Use Treatment
Will I be treated by a doctor?

There are different kinds of addiction specialists who will be involved in your care, including doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers, and others. In some treatment programs, different specialists work as a team to help you recover from your addiction.

What kind of counseling should I get?

Behavioral treatment (also known as "talk therapy") helps patients engage in the treatment process, change their attitudes and behaviors related to drug use, and increase healthy life skills. These treatments can also enhance the effectiveness of medications and help people stay in treatment longer. Treatment for drug use and addiction can be delivered in many different settings using a variety of behavioral approaches. You can read our DrugFacts about the different kinds of counseling and other behavioral treatments.
Will I need medication?

Some people do, and that is a good question to ask your treatment provider. Medications are currently available to treat addictions to alcohol, nicotine, and opioids (heroin and prescription pain relievers), and your treatment team might recommend one of those medicines. There are also medicines to treat mental health conditions (such as depression) that might be contributing to the addiction. In addition, medication is sometimes prescribed to help with the symptoms associated with drug withdrawal. When medication is available, it can be combined with behavioral therapy to ensure success for most patients. Some treatment centers follow the philosophy that they should not treat a drug addiction with other drugs, but research shows that with opioid use disorders, using medication is generally the most effective approach.

Read more about what treatments are available to treat your friend or loved one's addiction.