



## Alcoholism: Getting Help

Facing a problem with alcohol can be a fearful proposition. But when the alcoholic is ready to accept help, there is help available. The most common form of self-help is participation in support groups. In addition, many people require professional care on either an inpatient or outpatient basis. For help in understanding all the options, and for information and treatment referrals, see the web resources below.

### Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

One very popular form of self-help is regular participation in Alcoholics Anonymous. AA activities focus on helping members get sober, stay sober, and work out healthful patterns of living. There is no reason to fear attending an open AA meeting—everyone is welcome and participants are not required to identify themselves. Many people find it easier to attend the first meeting with another person. Those who don't know an AA member are invited to call the local chapter office for more information.

### Professional Care

Inpatient care may be required for medical detoxification, related health problems, or residential treatment. Outpatient care is provided by family doctors, professional alcoholism therapists and counselors, community alcoholism or mental health clinics, and any of the treatment centers listed in the telephone book. Since alcoholism is now widely recognized as a disease, most health insurance plans provide some treatment coverage.

### The Road to Recovery

While many alcoholics achieve lifelong sobriety, the change seldom comes easily or quickly, and treatment is only a beginning. Alcoholism is a persistent and relapsing disease, and once the alcoholic has stopped drinking, he or she needs continuing support to maintain sobriety. Aftercare programs and support groups such as AA are especially valuable for this. Still, relapses can occur and should not be taken as a sign of failure.

#### Resources on the Web:

**Alcoholics Anonymous**  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

**National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Addiction**  
[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

**National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)**  
[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)

**Alcoholism Recovery Website**  
[www.alcoholismhelp.com](http://www.alcoholismhelp.com)

**National Substance Abuse Web Index**  
[nsawi.health.org/compass](http://nsawi.health.org/compass)