

Alcohol and Drug Addiction Facts

Main Points

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that the disease of addiction affects nearly one out of every ten adults.
- The [National Institute of Drug Addiction](#) has reported that the estimated annual direct cost to our society resulting from substance abuse is more than 250 billion dollars – including nearly \$185 billion for alcohol and \$181 billion for illicit drugs.
- Both alcohol and drug addiction are life-threatening chronic diseases of the brain.
- Constant substance abuse chemically alters the brain, causing an individual to become dependent upon the substance. Over time, the individual will begin to experience powerful cravings and, when they don't respond quickly enough, strong and sometimes deadly withdrawal symptoms occur.
- Continued use of alcohol and drugs can also result in irreversible damage to the brain, liver, kidneys, heart and other organs – causing other severe health problems.
- According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)), chemical dependency, along with associated mental health disorders, has become one of the most severe health and social problems facing the United States.
- Similar to chronic diseases like diabetes and asthma, there are treatments available to manage addiction. In order to increase effectiveness, treatment must go beyond traditional talk and group therapy and incorporate the best science and medicine has to offer.
- Substance abuse and addiction also affects other areas, such as broken families, destroyed careers, death due to negligence or accident, domestic violence, physical abuse, and child abuse.
- Drug abuse and addiction changes your brain chemistry. The longer you use your drug of choice, the more damage is done – and the harder it is to go back to “normal” during drug rehab.
- Science has shown that a comprehensive approach to treating addiction – behavioral therapy, pharmacotherapy (anti-addiction medication), family therapy, psychiatric treatment (when needed) and a wellness and nutrition approach – is essential for long term sobriety.
- Drug abuse and addiction is a chronic, relapsing, compulsive disorder that often requires formal treatment. Effective treatment can be found from a comprehensive rehabilitation program that is tailored to meet the addict's specific needs. CHI Recovery is such a program.

Just the Stats

- According to SAMHSA's [2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\) \(PDF | 3.4 MB\)](#), approximately 7.9 million adults had co-occurring disorders in 2014. During the past year, for those adults surveyed who experienced substance use disorders and any mental illness, rates were highest among adults ages 26 to 49 (42.7%). For adults with past-year serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders, rates were highest among those ages 18 to 25 (35.3%) in 2014.
- One of every eight Americans has a significant problem with alcohol or drugs, with 40% of the group having a "dual diagnosis," or concurrent mental/ nervous disorder.



- In 2014, about 21.5 million Americans ages 12 and older (8.1%) were classified with a substance use disorder in the past year. Of those, 2.6 million had problems with both alcohol and drugs, 4.5 million had problems with drugs but not alcohol, and 14.4 million had problems with alcohol only.
- In 2014, 2.7% of individuals aged 12 or older in the United States (an estimated 7.1 million individuals) were dependent on or abused illicit drugs in the year prior to being surveyed. This percentage has not changed significantly since 2010.
- More than 47,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2014, with [opioids](#) like heroin and fentanyl accounting for nearly 60 percent of that total.
- The number of heroin users in the United States reached one million in 2014, a 20-year high, while heroin-related deaths have increased five-fold since 2000, according to a [United Nations](#) study published in June.

Cost to Society

- The estimated cost of drug abuse exceeds **\$190 Billion**:
 - \$130 Billion in lost productivity
 - \$20 Billion in healthcare costs
 - \$40 Billion in legal costs including efforts to stem the flow of drugs
- In 1993, the national rate of hospital stays involving opioid overuse among adults was 116.7 per 100,000. By 2012, the rate of hospital stays involving opioid overuse among adults had increased more than 150 percent
- Alcohol abuse disorders ranked as the 4th most common reason for admission among the uninsured, with nearly 78% originating in the Emergency Department, 2006-2011
- ED/ER visits for substance-related disorders increased 48%
- ED visits for alcohol-related disorders increased 34%
- Acute and unspecified renal failure increased 39%

These three areas were among the top five categories showing the most dramatic increases
(Source: www.ncadd.org)

Most Commonly Used and Abused Drugs

Without question, the most commonly used and abused drug, after alcohol, is marijuana. Each year more teens enter addiction treatment with a primary diagnosis of marijuana dependence than all other illegal drugs combined. Other common drugs of abuse include cocaine, heroin, inhalants, LSD (acid), MDMA (ecstasy), methamphetamine, phencyclidine (PCP), steroids (anabolic), Vicodin, OxyContin and other prescription drugs. For additional information about specific drugs including information by drug category, street name, how it is used and health risks: [Commonly Abused Drugs](#).

Prescription Opioids

- 78 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose.
- In 2014, more than 10 million people in the United States reported using prescription opioids for nonmedical reasons, and close to 2 million people older than 12 years met diagnostic criteria for a substance use disorder involving prescription opioids.



- There has been quadrupling of prescriptions for opioids since 1999, but there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report.
- As many as one in four patients receiving long-term opioid therapy in a primary care setting struggles with addiction.

(Source: www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/opioids)

- 4.3 million Americans engaged in non-medical use of prescription painkillers in the last month.
- Approximately 1.9 million Americans met criteria for prescription painkillers use disorder based on their use of prescription painkillers in the past year.
- 1.4 million people used prescription painkillers non-medically for the first time in the past year.
- The average age for prescription painkiller first-time use was 21.2 in the past year.

(Source: [National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)–2014 \(PDF | 3.4 MB\)](#))

Heroin

- 4.8 million people have used heroin at some point in their lives.
- Among people between the ages of 12 and 49, the average age of first use was 28.
- 212,000 people aged 12 or older used heroin for the first time within the past 12 months.
- Approximately 435,000 people were regular (past-month) users of heroin.

(Source: [SAMHSA's 2014 NSDUH \(PDF | 3.4 MB\)](#))

Alcohol

- Alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States: 17.6 million people, or one in every 12 adults, suffer from alcohol abuse or dependence along with several million more who engage in risky, binge drinking patterns that could lead to alcohol problems.
- More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking, and more than 7 million children live in a household where at least one parent is dependent on or has abused alcohol.
- Alcohol abuse and alcoholism can affect all aspects of a person's life. Long-term alcohol use can cause serious health complications, can damage emotional stability, finances, career, and impact one's family, friends and community.

More Facts About Alcohol:

- 88,000 deaths are annually attributed to excessive alcohol use
- Alcoholism is the 3rd leading lifestyle-related cause of death in the nation
- Excessive alcohol use is responsible for 2.5 million years of potential life lost annually, or an average of about 30 years of potential life lost for each death
- Up to 40% of all hospital beds in the United States (except for those being used by maternity and intensive care patients) are being used to treat health conditions that are related to alcohol consumption

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in the United States:

- **Adults (ages 18+):** 16.3 million adults ages 18 and older (6.8 percent of this age group) had an AUD in 2014. This includes 10.6 million men (9.2 percent of men in this age group) and 5.7 million women (4.6 percent of women in this age group).
- **Youth (ages 12–17):** In 2014, an estimated 679,000 adolescents ages 12–17 (2.7 percent of this age group) had an AUD. This number includes 367,000 females (3.0 percent of females in this age group) and 311,000 males (2.5 percent of males in this age group).



Alcohol-Related Deaths:

- Nearly 88,000 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the fourth leading preventable cause of death in the United States.
- In 2014, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities accounted for 9,967 deaths (31 percent of overall driving fatalities).

Economic Burden:

- The estimated cost of drug abuse exceeds \$190 Billion
- The National Institute of Drug Addiction has reported that the estimated annual direct cost to our society resulting from substance abuse is more than 250 billion dollars – including nearly \$185 billion for alcohol and \$181 billion for illicit drugs
- In 2010, alcohol misuse problems cost the United States \$249.0 billion
- Three-quarters of the total cost of alcohol misuse is related to binge drinking

(Source: www.niaaa.nih.gov)

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