



Who's At Risk

for an Alcohol-Related Problem?

Here are some factors that might put a person at risk for an alcohol-related problem. Having these risks does not mean that a person *will* develop alcohol problems.



#1: Starting young

The younger someone is when they start drinking, the higher the chances of developing alcohol use disorder (AUD) later. AUD is a medical term that captures health conditions known as alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence, alcohol addiction, or alcoholism. For example, adults ages 26 and older who began drinking before age 15 are 5 times more likely to report having AUD in the past year as those who waited until age 21 or later to begin drinking.



#2: Having an impulsive temperament

Some people have the strong urge to act on impulse and to seek new experiences. They have a higher risk of starting to drink early and developing alcohol problems.



#3: Having friends who drink

The more friends a person has who drink, the more likely that person is to drink.



#4: Having close family members with an alcohol-related problem

This raises your risk of developing an alcohol problem, but it is not destiny. You can make your own decisions and protect yourself from alcohol problems.

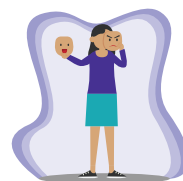


#5: Having behaviors that increase the risk of alcohol problems

Experiencing early childhood trauma or having behavioral issues and certain mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (also known as ADHD*), or other substance use, can increase a pre-teen or teen's risk of developing alcohol problems.

Preteens and teens who have already begun drinking are even more likely to have alcohol problems if they:

- Drink heavily
- Drink to get drunk
- Drink to escape problems
- Feel less of an effect from alcohol than other people would
- Use other substances in addition to alcohol



#6: Setting healthy expectations for safe, legal alcohol use in the future

Some people think alcohol can help them feel more friendly, happy, relaxed, or successful. They fail to recognize that drinking can lead to a range of alcohol problems.

*See <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/adhd.html> to learn more about ADHD.



National Institute
on Alcohol Abuse
and Alcoholism