

# HOW TO FIND QUALITY ADDICTION TREATMENT

It can be overwhelming and confusing to know where to start if you need to find treatment for addiction. Finding the right addiction treatment is not a quick or easy process. This comprehensive, step-by-step guide was designed by a team of addiction experts at CASAColumbia® and reviewed by addiction physician specialists.

It was created to help you navigate the vast amount of information—and misinformation—about finding addiction treatment and the questions that may arise along your journey. You can use the guide for yourself or for a friend, family member or someone you know living with the disease. It will point you toward the best quality treatment, but depending on where you live, your treatment options may be limited. If this is the case for you, we recommend you use this guide to identify the best provider available, but that doesn't mean you should ever go without treatment.

Although addiction can involve compulsive behaviors like gambling and possibly sex or eating, this guide focuses on finding treatment for addiction involving nicotine, alcohol and other drugs.

*Information provided in this guide is meant to complement and not replace any information from a health professional. If you have a medical emergency or need immediate medical attention, call 911 and/or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.*

## **i IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**You do not need to hit “rock bottom” before starting treatment. In fact, starting addiction treatment early may lead to better results. Even people who may say they “aren’t ready” or “don’t really want help” can benefit from the right treatment.**





# STEP 1: THE DIAGNOSIS

The first step for anyone concerned they have addiction is to get an accurate diagnosis. This involves a series of questions to determine the severity of your addiction—mild, moderate or severe. Your doctor should ask about all of the addictive substances you use and may conduct blood tests. Your diagnosis should also include an evaluation of any other health conditions you may have that could impact your treatment.

Your diagnosis should be made by a doctor. Ask your regular doctor if she or he knows how to diagnose addiction. If your regular doctor is not trained in how to address addiction, you can ask her or him to refer you to a health care provider who is, for example, an addiction physician specialist.

There are two types of addiction physician specialists:

- **Addiction medicine physicians** are doctors from different specialties who have advanced training or education in addiction treatment
- **Addiction psychiatrists** are doctors who specialize in psychiatry with advanced training in addiction treatment

If you can't find an addiction physician specialist, the best option is to:

1. Ask your doctor to evaluate whether you have any other medical, including mental health, conditions
2. Make an appointment with one of the other health care professionals listed on page 4 to get an addiction diagnosis

## Symptoms of Addiction

Addiction involving nicotine, alcohol and other drugs is defined as having 2 or more of the following symptoms within a 12-month period:

- Often taking more of the substance for a longer period than intended
- Ongoing desire or unsuccessful efforts to reduce use
- Great deal of time spent to obtain, use or recover from the substance
- Craving the substance
- Failing to fulfill obligations at work, home or school as a result of continued use
- Continued use despite ongoing social or relationship problems caused or worsened by use
- Giving up or reducing social, occupational or recreational activities because of use
- Repeated use in physically dangerous situations (like drinking or using other drugs while driving, or smoking in bed)
- Continued use despite ongoing physical or mental health problems caused or worsened by use
- Developing tolerance (feeling less effect from the substance with continued use)
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms after reducing use\* (symptoms vary by substance)

*\*Withdrawal does not happen with all substances—for example, not with inhalants or hallucinogens*



MILD ADDICTION: 2 OR 3 SYMPTOMS



MODERATE ADDICTION: 4 OR 5 SYMPTOMS



SEVERE ADDICTION: 6 OR MORE SYMPTOMS

*Source: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) 5*



# STEP 2: THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT



Next is the comprehensive assessment—which should ideally be conducted by a doctor, usually the same doctor who gave you the diagnosis.

During your comprehensive assessment, you will be asked a series of questions. You can complete some of the answers to these questions in advance and share them with the doctor.

## Typical Assessment Questions:

- What is your history of use for all addictive substances?
- What is your likelihood of continuing to use or to relapse?
- What is your primary way of taking substances—smoking, eating/swallowing, inhaling, using needles to inject?
- What is your history of addiction treatment and relapse, including tobacco/nicotine quit attempts?
- Do you have any other health conditions that require medical attention or will complicate your addiction treatment? This includes mental health or psychiatric disorders (like depression, anxiety or ADHD), other compulsive behaviors (like gambling) or other medical conditions (like diabetes, lung or heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, other STIs)
- Will your living situation make following your treatment plan difficult?
- Do you have family members or friends who are willing to be involved in your treatment?
- Are there any housing, child care, employment or legal issues that may affect your treatment participation?
- What treatment options are you ready/willing to participate in?

The comprehensive assessment, along with your diagnosis, will give the doctor the information necessary to determine your treatment needs.

## Your Treatment Needs May Include:

- Medically-managed withdrawal, also known as detoxification, before starting treatment
- Treatment to address any other health, including mental health, problems
- The right setting, level and length of care for you
- Specific addiction treatment services, for example, medications and effective psychosocial therapies (sometimes just called therapy). *May also be determined later by your addiction treatment provider as part of your treatment plan*
- Whether you should see an addiction treatment provider who offers treatment for specific groups of people. Examples include: adolescents, women, pregnant women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) persons, pilots, doctors, lawyers and professional athletes
- Whether support services are needed



## NOTES

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**MYTH:** I only smoke/drink/use drugs to treat my other health condition (depression/anxiety/pain). If I get treatment for my other condition, I won't need addiction treatment.

**FACT:** Even if you think you are only using a substance to treat another health condition, getting professional treatment for the other condition will not necessarily help you to stop using tobacco products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, snuff, snus and pipe, loose-leaf, chewing or dissolvable tobacco), alcohol or other drugs. Seek treatment for both addiction and your other health condition.

### What if your regular doctor can't do the comprehensive assessment?

If your regular doctor isn't comfortable doing the comprehensive assessment, ask him or her to refer you to an addiction physician specialist. Your doctor can still support you and help you navigate the treatment system.

If you can't find an addiction physician specialist in your area, you can still rely on your regular doctor to assess your health care needs and to coordinate with other trained addiction treatment providers to ensure you have a single point person overseeing your care.

#### **i IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

##### **Where can I find an addiction physician specialist?**

- **Addiction medicine physician**  
visit [www.abam.net/find-a-doctor](http://www.abam.net/find-a-doctor)
- **Addiction psychiatrist**  
visit <https://application.abpn.com/verifycert/verifyCert.asp?a=4>

**Note:** for specialty select Addiction Psychiatry



### Other Health Care Professionals Who Can Conduct Your Assessment:

- Licensed clinical psychologists (with a Ph.D. or a Psy.D.) who are trained in addiction treatment
- Licensed clinical social workers (L.C.S.W.) or licensed clinical mental health counselors (L.M.H.C.; L.P.C. or L.C.M.H.C.) who are trained in addiction treatment
- Licensed or certified addiction counselors with a master's or doctoral degree in counseling

It is important that the person conducting your assessment has one of these specific degrees and training in addiction treatment, because not every person who offers treatment for addiction has been properly trained. **If you are not sure of their training or degree, ask them for it.**

Make sure your regular doctor stays involved in your treatment and coordinates with your addiction treatment providers. Ask your doctor to get copies of all treatment records and test results and keep them in your chart. You may need to sign a release form so that your records can be shared with your doctor. After treatment, your doctor should oversee your continuing care plan, especially if you are taking medication, and he or she should continue to share information with your addiction treatment provider in case any changes need to be made.



## SETTINGS AND LEVELS OF ADDICTION TREATMENT

After the comprehensive assessment, your doctor will recommend a specific treatment setting—like inpatient or outpatient—and the level of care you should receive.

### Treatment Settings and Levels of Care (ordered from the least to the most intensive)

#### Outpatient

- **Overview:** Delivered in a variety of locations, such as a physician's office or a health, mental health or addiction clinic. Other health conditions, including mental health, can also be addressed
- **Hours Per Week:** Usually less than 9 hours of therapy and education per week
- **Best For:** Those with mild to moderate addiction and who have a supportive living environment
- **Living Environment:** You live at home and may be able to work or go to school

#### Methadone Maintenance Clinic

- **Overview:** A specially licensed outpatient clinic that dispenses methadone, an effective medication for patients with addiction involving opioids. Some programs also provide buprenorphine (Suboxone), an alternative medication.
- **Hours Per Week:** Methadone doses are picked up once/day during the early stage of treatment and then less frequently once you become stabilized. Most clinics offer infrequent therapy services, and so you may need to seek therapy from another outpatient provider in addition to the prescribed methadone or buprenorphine.
- **Best For:** People with severe or chronic addiction involving opioids.
- **Living Environment:** Initially, you must live close enough to the clinic to receive your medication most days of the week.



#### Intensive Outpatient

- **Overview:** Offers similar services to outpatient care, but services are offered more frequently. Can also arrange for treatment of mild to moderate medical, including mental health, conditions at the same time
- **Hours Per Week:** Usually 9 or more hours of therapy and education per week
- **Best For:** People who have more complex cases of addiction and who have a supportive living environment
- **Living Environment:** You live at home and may be able to work or go to school

#### Partial Hospitalization

- **Overview:** A type of outpatient treatment, also called day treatment, for individuals requiring more services than intensive outpatient due to the severity of their addiction or other health conditions
- **Hours Per Week:** Usually 20 or more hours of therapy and education per week—up to 9 hours per day, up to 7 days a week
- **Best For:** People with more complex cases of addiction and/or other serious medical, including mental health, conditions who have a supportive living environment
- **Living Environment:** You live at home, but usually spend a lot of time each day in treatment, which can make working or going to school difficult



## Residential Non-Hospital

- **Overview:** Services are provided in a live-in setting. Residential non-hospital care includes 3 different levels of care, which differ in the intensity of services offered and their ability to treat more severe forms of addiction and/or other serious health conditions
- **Hours Per Week:** Usually 24-hours/day
- **Best For:** Residential treatment is best for people with more severe addiction and other medical conditions, or those who need a safe and stable living environment where treatment services are provided
- **Living Environment:** You live at the facility, away from home, with others in treatment and have access to professional support at all times

## Medically-Managed Intensive Inpatient

- **Overview:** Round-the-clock hospital treatment for people with severe medical problems, sometimes due to addiction (like someone who is in a car crash while intoxicated or has a life-threatening health condition)
- **Hours Per Week:** Offers 24-hour treatment supervised or provided by a physician
- **Best For:** People with severe health, including mental health, conditions who need constant nursing care or medical supervision
- **Living Environment:** You stay in the hospital until treatment is completed or until you can be safely transferred to another treatment setting

Source: Adapted from American Society for Addiction Medicine Patient Placement Criteria

**MYTH:** If you want to get better, you should get residential treatment.

**FACT:** Treatment in a residential setting is not necessary or even most effective for everyone. The setting and level of treatment that is right for you should be based on your diagnosis and comprehensive assessment.



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# STEP 3: MEDICALLY-MANAGED WITHDRAWAL



Some people who are severely intoxicated or have symptoms of withdrawal may need medically-managed withdrawal, also called detoxification. Detoxification will keep you safe and more comfortable while you stop using substances.

Detoxification may include:

- Tapering your dose
- Easing your symptoms with medication
- Other medical and social supports

Your doctor will determine whether you need medical care for withdrawal and should recommend the appropriate location of care—like a hospital or your doctor’s office. If you need medically-managed withdrawal, a doctor—sometimes in combination with other health care professionals—will supervise your detoxification. Individuals who have addiction involving opioids (e.g., heroin, OxyContin®, Vicodin®) may immediately be started on a long-term medication to prevent withdrawal symptoms and reduce cravings.

## **i IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Undergoing detoxification by itself is not addiction treatment, but it may be an important first step in the recovery process.**

## **? HELPFUL TIP**

**Some addiction treatment providers require you to be substance-free and free of withdrawal symptoms before you can start treatment.**

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WITHDRAWAL**

Sometimes when a person stops taking drugs all at once, the person experiences withdrawal symptoms—feeling very sick or experiencing distress or cravings. Withdrawal is common for addiction involving nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, sedatives like Xanax or Valium, opioids like Vicodin, OxyContin or heroin, stimulants like cocaine or methamphetamine and other drugs.

Withdrawal symptoms can range from life-threatening (hallucinations, fever, rapid heartbeat and seizures) to very uncomfortable (anxiety, irritability, pain, vomiting, flu-like symptoms) to mildly annoying (headache or poor sleep).

Some withdrawal symptoms are serious enough to require medical attention. Withdrawal from alcohol and some sedatives, like Xanax or Valium, can be very severe and should always be managed by a physician.





It is very important to seek medical care if you are experiencing withdrawal symptoms instead of “toughing it out” or thinking you deserve to suffer.

If withdrawal is not properly addressed, it can make your treatment less successful because withdrawal symptoms put people at risk for relapse. Those in withdrawal may begin using substances again just to relieve their withdrawal symptoms.

### Start Treatment Immediately After Detoxification

Before starting detoxification, make a plan to begin receiving addiction treatment immediately afterwards. The doctor who conducted your comprehensive assessment should help you arrange to start treatment afterwards. You can also ask your detoxification provider for help. You may also want to arrange in advance for someone to transport you directly to treatment after you finish detoxification.



### **i** IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**If you do not begin treatment immediately after detoxification, you are at high risk of relapse and of overdose because your tolerance for the substance has gone down. If you are helping a friend or family member, make sure the person goes straight to treatment after detoxification.**

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## STEP 4:

# FINDING THE RIGHT TREATMENT PROVIDER

It can be difficult to locate an effective addiction treatment provider because people with little or no health care training can claim they know how to treat addiction and people with health care training don't always offer effective treatments for the disease.

Because the addiction treatment system is complex, it can be overwhelming to tackle.

**If you are seeking care for yourself:** it may be helpful to ask a friend or family member to help you.

**If you are helping a family member or friend:** this next section will simplify the process and provide you with step-by-step instructions to find the right addiction treatment provider.

### **i IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Addiction treatment should be managed by a doctor, or in some cases a clinical psychologist trained in addiction treatment. This doctor will oversee your care and work with other health care professionals who are also trained or certified to provide effective treatments for addiction.

### **? HELPFUL TIP**

If you are seeking treatment in a residential setting, find a facility where an addiction medicine physician or addiction psychiatrist is on staff full time to ensure that an experienced doctor is supervising your care.

### Who should be a part of your addiction treatment team?

- **Primary care doctors (M.D./D.O.)** can offer some forms of addiction treatment. This can include prescribing medications and diagnosing and treating medical, including mental health, conditions. They can also coordinate and manage your care. Some primary care doctors are trained to provide effective treatments for mild to moderate cases of addiction
- **Addiction medicine physicians and addiction psychiatrists (M.D./D.O.)** can advise your doctor, prescribe medications, provide specialty care for severe forms of addiction and manage/supervise other professionals providing addiction treatment
- **Licensed clinical psychologists (Ph.D./Psy.D.) with training in effective addiction treatments** can provide therapy and, in some cases, supervise your treatment (though a physician should always be a part of your treatment team)
- **Master's-level licensed clinical psychologists and addiction counselors, licensed clinical social workers (L.C.S.W.), and licensed clinical mental health counselors (L.M.H.C., L.P.C. or L.C.M.H.C.) with training in effective addiction treatments** can provide therapy and work with the doctor who is managing your care
- **Other addiction counselors** can assist in providing therapy and other services under the supervision of a more highly trained professional. Also known as Substance Abuse Counselors (S.A.C.), Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselors (C.A.S.A.C.), Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselors (C.D.A.C.) or Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (L.A.D.C.)
- **Physician's assistants, nurses and nurse practitioners with training in addiction treatment who are working under a doctor's supervision** can provide some treatments and help manage your care



## **i IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Not all treatments for addiction are effective. For a list of effective addiction treatments, see page 13.**

### Identifying Possible Addiction Treatment Providers

Now that you know your treatment needs, you can look for an addiction treatment provider who can address them. Choosing an addiction treatment provider who offers the right setting and level of care for you is critical. If you receive the wrong kind of treatment, it could make your addiction worse.



**MYTH:** This worked for me so it will work for you.

**FACT:** Beware of treatment providers who only offer the treatment that worked for them. Everyone has different treatment needs. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Addiction treatment must be tailored to your needs or it won't work.

**There are several ways to research addiction treatment providers. You can search for:**

- An individual provider by name or specialty
- A treatment facility by name or type of facility—such as a clinic, community mental health center, residential facility or hospital

### How to Search for an Individual Addiction Treatment Provider

**Disclaimer: CASAColumbia has not reviewed these providers and does not guarantee their quality of care**

- To locate an **addiction physician specialist**:
  - Search for an addiction medicine physician on [www.abam.net/find-a-doctor](http://www.abam.net/find-a-doctor)
  - Search for an addiction psychiatrist on <https://application.abpn.com/verifycert/verifyCert.asp?a=4>  
Note: for specialty select Addiction Psychiatry
- To locate an **addiction treatment provider that takes your insurance**:
  - Call your health insurance company and ask which addiction treatment providers are in network or search the company's website for providers
  - Insurance companies may have a separate directory for mental or behavioral health providers. If so, look there
  - Your plan may use the terms **substance abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, chemical dependence, mental health or behavioral health** instead of addiction
  - Once you identify potential addiction treatment providers, call and confirm they offer addiction treatment services in the setting you need. Say something like "my insurance company lists you as an addiction treatment provider offering intensive outpatient care, is that correct?" In some cases, the insurance company's list is not accurate



## How to Search for an Addiction Treatment Facility

- Visit the SAMHSA treatment facility locator at <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx>. This is a national website offered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
  - Call the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-622-HELP. For the hearing impaired, call 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)
- Check your state government's website
  - To find your state government's website, enter the name of your state and ".gov" into a search engine. Top results should include your state website
  - Once on site, search for keywords like: department of mental health, behavioral health or addiction services. These agencies may publish information about addiction treatment providers in your state
- Search SAMHSA's directory of state agencies that provide addiction services at <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/ssadirectory.pdf>

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### HELPFUL TIP

**As you conduct your search, beware of any addiction treatment providers promising a cure. There is no cure for addiction yet. There is reason to hope that someday, as research advances, there will be a cure. However, addiction treatment can help you manage the disease.**



## How to Search for Quit Smoking Support

- In addition to getting help from your regular doctor or addiction treatment provider, these free smoking cessation services may help:
  - Call 1-800-Quit-Now to receive information, advice, support and referrals from counselors who are trained to help smokers quit
  - Visit <http://www.becomeanex.org/>, a free quit smoking program
  - Visit <http://www.smokefree.gov/> for mobile apps, information and professional assistance to support both your immediate and long-term needs
  - Visit <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/how-to-quit/getting-help/> for specialized quit smoking assistance, like free counseling, for adult and teen smokers
  - Sign up for SmokefreeTXT, a free mobile service for teens and young adults. Text "QUIT" to 47848 from your mobile phone or visit <http://smokefree.gov/smokefreetxt/Signup.aspx>



## Other Resources

Some other options exist for specific groups of individuals looking for treatment, including employees and veterans.

- **For Employees:** If your employer has an Employee Assistance Program, call and ask if they can refer you to an addiction treatment provider
- **For Veterans:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Substance Use Disorder Program Locator lists addiction treatment providers for veterans and, in some circumstances, their family members. Visit [www2.va.gov/directory/guide/SUD\\_flsh.asp?isFlash=1](http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/SUD_flsh.asp?isFlash=1)
  - There may be a limited number of addiction treatment providers in your state, and the nearest provider may be too far for you

## Look for Addiction Treatment Providers that Are Licensed/Accredited

Addiction treatment facilities should be licensed by the state they are based in. State licensing means that the provider meets basic quality and safety requirements. It does not guarantee that they provide effective treatments. Some states do not require all addiction facilities to be licensed.

In addition to or instead of licensing, addiction treatment facilities may be accredited. Accreditation means that providers meet standards of care and quality improvement set by a national organization that reviews facilities for compliance, but it doesn't necessarily mean the provider offers effective treatments.

Each individual provider, including each staff person at a treatment facility, should be licensed to practice their profession. In some states, addiction counselors aren't required to be licensed, but they should be certified.

## ? HELPFUL TIP

**Remember, your treatment should be managed by a doctor trained in addiction treatment. In some cases, a clinical psychologist (with a Ph.D. or Psy.D.) trained in addiction treatment may supervise your care, but a physician should be part of the team. All therapies should be provided by Doctoral or Master's-level clinicians.**

## ? HELPFUL TIP

**BEWARE- Some addiction treatment providers claim they provide evidence-based therapy, but only offer one kind of therapy, or only offer such therapy 1 or 2 hours per week (which in most cases is not enough to be effective). If you are treated in an intensive outpatient or residential setting, choose a provider that offers evidence-based therapies regularly, or at least 3 hours per week.**

## Find a Provider that Offers Effective Treatments for Addiction

Although there is no cure for addiction, there are effective health care treatments, including medications and evidence-based therapies, and ways to manage the disease. For most people with addiction, a combination of medication and therapy, plus treatment for any medical, including mental health, conditions works best. If left untreated or if not treated properly, addiction can lead to many serious health and social consequences, including death.

*The information provided in this guide is meant to complement and not replace any advice or information from a health professional*





## Effective Treatments for Addiction

### • Medication

Addiction can and should be treated with medication, if deemed appropriate by your doctor. Because addiction can be chronic, some people may need to take medication for a long time.

You may not know yet which medication, if any, is appropriate, but you do want to be sure your addiction treatment provider offers most or all of the following U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved medications to treat addiction involving:

#### – Nicotine

- > bupropion (Zyban®)
- > varenicline (Chantix®)
- > nicotine replacement therapy (e.g., patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray and inhaler)

#### – Alcohol

- > acamprosate (Campral®)
- > naltrexone (Vivitrol®, Revia®, Depade®)
- > disulfiram (Antabuse®)

#### – Opioids

- > naltrexone (Vivitrol®, Revia®, Depade®)
- > methadone
- > buprenorphine + naloxone (Suboxone®)

### • Therapy

There are several different types of therapies that are effective, depending on your needs and circumstances. You may not know which specific type of therapy you should receive, but you do want to be sure the addiction treatment provider you select offers a range of the following effective therapies to meet your needs:

#### – Motivational Interviewing and Motivational Enhancement Therapy

- > **How It Works:** Bolsters motivation to change substance use behaviors

#### – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- > **How It Works:** Helps identify, recognize and avoid thought processes, behaviors and situations associated with substance use. Helps manage cravings, refuse offers of tobacco products, alcohol or other drugs, and develop better problem-solving and coping skills

**MYTH:** If you are taking medication for addiction you are not “sober,” you are simply “replacing” your addiction with another drug.

**FACT:** The idea that you should not take medication for addiction can be dangerous. Medication prescribed by a doctor is an effective and sometimes lifesaving treatment for addiction.

#### – Community Reinforcement Approach

- > **How It Works:** Focuses on improving family relations, learning skills to reduce substance use, acquiring job skills, and developing recreational activities and social networks that can help to minimize the drive to use substances

#### – Contingency Management

- > **How It Works:** Alters behavior by rewarding constructive behaviors and sometimes by discouraging unhealthy behaviors

#### – Behavioral Couples/Family Therapy

- > **How It Works:** Improves communication and support and reduces conflict between couples and families that have a member with addiction

#### – Multidimensional Family Therapy for Adolescents

- > **How It Works:** Addresses adolescent substance use in relation to individual, family, peer and community-level influences

#### – Functional Family Therapy for Adolescents

- > **How It Works:** Engages and motivates adolescents and families to make long-term behavior changes, including positive behavior changes in other areas of family functioning

#### – Multi-Systemic Therapy for Adolescents

- > **How It Works:** Addresses substance use, attempts to reduce criminal and other forms of problem behavior





Your addiction treatment provider may include peer support programs in your treatment plan. In some cases, people may recover using only peer support –your doctor should determine if this approach is right for you.

### Other Important Treatment Factors

- **Treat All Forms of Addiction at Once**

If you are being treated for addiction involving one substance, it is important to stop using all substances, including tobacco products (cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, snuff, snus and pipe, loose-leaf, chewing or dissolvable tobacco). All addictive substances affect the brain in similar ways, so continuing to use other substances may mean your treatment won't work.

Treating addiction involving all substances at the same time, rather than one at a time, reduces the risk of relapsing or replacing one drug with another. For instance, treating addiction involving nicotine at the same time as addiction involving alcohol or other drugs decreases the chances of relapse to alcohol or other drug use.

- **Treat Other Related Health Conditions**

Many people with addiction live with other diseases like heart or lung disease, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric and mental health conditions. Health conditions that can complicate or reduce the effectiveness of addiction treatment must be treated at the same time.

### **i** IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Do not try to self-medicate or treat other health conditions like depression, anxiety or pain with tobacco products, alcohol or other drugs. Using addictive substances can actually be the cause of your mental health symptoms—or make them worse—and your symptoms may get better if you stop using them.**



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### **?** HELPFUL TIP

**If you use tobacco products, look for a treatment setting that is tobacco-free (except for nicotine replacement therapy)—both inside the facility and on the facility grounds.**



## Treatment for Specific Groups of People

Some people may respond better to treatment if they are treated with other individuals like them, for example:

- **Women**, especially women with a history of being abused or those who are pregnant or are mothers
- **Older adults**, who may be coping with poor health, death of a loved one, career challenges, or a loss of their independence
- **Adolescents**, who have different treatment needs than adults
- **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI) individuals** who may experience similar social stresses and circumstances
- **Lawyers, doctors, pilots and athletes**, who can benefit from treatment that focuses on the stresses, circumstances, needs and requirements unique to their profession

## Mandatory Treatment

Many people are required to go to treatment—maybe because of a court order, to keep a job, or as required by child protective services. Those required to go to treatment may do as well as, or better than, people who enter treatment for other reasons.

In some cases, people are required to go to an addiction treatment provider who does not offer the right treatment for them, which may mean that the treatment won't work. If you are required to go to treatment, ask the person requiring your treatment if you can get a diagnostic evaluation and a comprehensive assessment from a physician. You can then ask to be referred to an addiction treatment provider who can tailor treatment to your needs.



**MYTH:** You have to really want to get better for treatment to work.

**FACT:** Trained addiction treatment providers can help you develop the motivation to stick with treatment, even if you “aren’t ready” to stop smoking, drinking or using drugs or “don’t want help.”

## Treatment Recommendations from Friends and Family

When facing addiction, you may turn to friends, family or people in your community for recommendations about addiction treatment providers, but use caution when it comes to referrals. Treatment for addiction must be tailored to your needs as determined by your comprehensive assessment. It is not a one-size fits all approach, so what worked for your neighbor may not work for you.

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## Treatment Barriers

### • A Waiting List

Sometimes addiction treatment providers may not be accepting new patients and you may be placed on a waiting list. If this happens, you should discuss the best option with your doctor. Based on the severity of your addiction and availability of social support, you may be able to wait, but in many cases it is best to find a different addiction treatment provider that can take you right away.

### • Paying for Treatment

How you pay for treatment depends primarily on whether or not you have health insurance.

#### – If You Have Health Insurance:

- > Some or all of your treatments may be covered. Ask your addiction treatment provider to call your insurer and find out what is covered. You can also call your insurer directly or look up your benefits on their website. Look for the types of medications and treatment settings, like inpatient/outpatient, that are covered. Addiction treatment facilities should give you clear, easy-to-understand information about how much their treatment costs and what will and won't be covered by your insurance.
- > Your insurer may set limits on covered services, like the number of visits or length of stay allowed. Even if all treatment is covered, you may be responsible for certain expenses, like co-payments and deductibles.

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## ? HELPFUL TIP

### Do you need preauthorization?

**Before starting treatment, some insurance providers require preauthorization. This means you or your addiction treatment provider must call and get approval from your insurer before starting treatment.**



#### – If You Don't Have Health Insurance:

- > If you can't afford to pay for treatment on your own, you may qualify for financial assistance from your city, county or state. Ask your addiction treatment provider to connect you to financial assistance programs.
- > Some addiction treatment providers offer reduced or free services to individuals who cannot afford to pay for treatment. Ask about working out a payment plan.
- > The SAMHSA facility locator can help you find addiction treatment providers that offer payment assistance, but it does not assure the quality of their care. Visit <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx> and search for providers by state. Enter your zip code or address and choose "select services" to search for providers offering a "sliding fee scale" or "payment assistance."

**MYTH:** You get what you pay for.

**FACT:** Treatment that costs more money isn't necessarily better. Often expensive treatment facilities offer lots of "extras" that haven't been proven to treat addiction. Programs that offer effective or evidenced-based services aren't necessarily more expensive.



# STEP 5: GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR TREATMENT

Now that you have selected an addiction treatment provider, you can focus on your specific treatment.

## DEVELOP A TREATMENT PLAN

Before you start treatment, you and your addiction treatment provider will work together to develop a treatment plan. Make sure your provider involves you in the planning process.

First, discuss your diagnosis and comprehensive assessment with your addiction treatment provider. Your provider may confirm your diagnosis of addiction and any medical, including mental health, conditions you may have.

The results of your comprehensive assessment will help your provider develop a unique treatment plan, which takes your feedback and input into account. You can also ask your provider for help understanding what to expect during treatment and what outcomes are typical.

### How Long Should Addiction Treatment Last?

Treatment is highly individual and must last long enough to achieve the goals outlined in your treatment plan. In general, the necessary length of treatment will vary by person and will depend on several factors, including the severity of your addiction, other health, including mental health, conditions, and your family and social support.

### Key Treatment Plan Components

- Identify the specific therapies and medications you will receive and setting where the services will be provided
- List your priorities for treatment—any specific problems you need to address and your strengths, skills and resources to address them
- Spell out your specific goals for treatment
  - E.g., reducing or eliminating substance use, improving health status, acquiring skills to manage your disease, improving your work, family and social life, being reunited with your family

As you undergo addiction treatment, your provider will evaluate your treatment plan periodically and—with your input—measure your progress and adjust the plan if needed. For example, if you are not achieving your goals, another type or level of treatment may be needed.





## Seek Support Services

Ask your addiction treatment provider for help accessing support services—including peer support and social services—which will help your recovery both during treatment and after treatment.

- **Examples of peer support:** Alcoholics Anonymous, LifeRing, Narcotics Anonymous, Other 12-Step Programs, Secular Organizations for Sobriety, SMART Recovery, Women for Sobriety
- **Examples of social services:** Parenting/child care, employment, legal, educational and housing assistance

Peer support programs are not treatment but they can be a very important part of the recovery process for many individuals. These free programs offer advice and support from people with experience managing their own addiction and can be an effective part of managing your disease when used in combination with treatment.

In addition to peer support programs, sober houses or sober group homes are housing programs where people recovering from addiction live together. Though no treatment is provided, these peer-support housing programs may help you manage the disease. There are no standards for these housing programs, so the accommodations and community rules can vary significantly. Only consider housing programs that enforce rules prohibiting substance use and possession.



**MYTH:** If treatment doesn't work, it's your fault.

**FACT:** If your treatment wasn't successful, you may have received the wrong diagnosis, your assessment may have been incorrect, you may have received poor quality care, or not enough treatment. Maybe you didn't get the right support services or follow up care. But even with the best treatment, addiction can be a chronic disease and may involve multiple relapses. If you relapse, talk to your addiction treatment provider immediately; your treatment plan may need to be changed.

## Plan for Continuing Care

Addiction can be a chronic disease, and like other chronic diseases, often requires long-term management. Before you leave treatment, work with your provider to develop a plan for continuing care, which can sometimes be called aftercare or follow-up care. Your plan for continuing care will include the services necessary to help you maintain the progress you achieved during treatment and avoid relapse.

### Continuing Care May Include:

- Therapy
- Medications (many medications designed to treat addiction are taken for an extended period of time)
- Support services
- General medical care

## Confirm You Are Ready for Discharge

Before being transferred or discharged from treatment, you should be evaluated to confirm that you have achieved the goals set forth in your treatment plan. If any new challenges arise during treatment, your treatment plan should be updated.

### ? HELPFUL TIP

**Look for addiction treatment providers who will *not* automatically expel you if you relapse during treatment.**



# STEP 6: STAY HEALTHY BY MANAGING YOUR DISEASE



After your initial treatment, it is important to play an active role in managing your disease and maintaining the progress you have made. There are several steps you can take:

- Follow your continuing care plan, which can include taking any medications as prescribed, participating in therapy, attending peer support meetings and working with social service providers, if appropriate
- Continue to work with your doctor to manage your addiction and other health conditions



## **i IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Addiction can be a chronic disease like diabetes or cancer. The best way to manage it? Receive ongoing care and support to maintain your progress. If relapse occurs, get re-assessed and receive additional or different treatments if needed.

## **What if I Relapse?**

Relapse can sometimes occur and it is important to get help quickly. The doctor supervising your addiction treatment should re-assess your condition and change your treatment plan if needed.

Recovery from addiction may require a life-long commitment to your health.

## **NOTES**

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# SUMMARY:

## QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL TREATMENT PROVIDERS



• Does the provider offer the specific settings and levels of treatments that you need?

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• Will the provider address your use of all addictive substances, including tobacco/nicotine?

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• How will treatment be tailored to your needs?

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• What specific effective addiction treatments, including medications and therapies, does the provider offer? Beware—some addiction treatment providers offer effective treatment, but offer too few options or don't offer it frequently enough

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• Is medical, including mental health, care available on-site, so that all of your health conditions can be treated at the same time?

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• Does the provider offer couples/family therapy? Support from family members can help you start and stay in treatment. For adolescents in particular, the use of family-based therapies can improve outcomes

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• Is the facility licensed by the state or accredited?

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• Are the treatment staff licensed/certified in addiction treatment and supervised by an addiction physician specialist?

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• How is relapse handled? Confirm that you will not be automatically expelled from treatment if you relapse

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• Will the provider supervise your continuing care after treatment?

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• What kinds of support services are available?

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