

Dependence

This means that drinking alcohol has become an important, or sometimes the most important, factor in a person's life and they feel unable to function without it.

Several different factors contribute to someone becoming alcohol dependent.

Alcohol dependence can run in families. It's partly down to your genes, but is also influenced by your family's attitudes to alcohol and the environment you grew up in. Stressful life events, such as bereavement or losing a job, can trigger heavy drinking, which can then lead to alcohol dependence.

Physical Dependence

One of the earliest signs of physical dependence is when you need to drink more alcohol to achieve the desired effect. Then, as dependence develops further, people notice that they get the shakes if they don't have a drink. And so they simply have to keep drinking to avoid experiencing these physical withdrawal symptoms, a pattern known as 'relief drinking'.

Physical symptoms include:

- hand tremors ('the shakes')
- sweating
- nausea / retching
- visual hallucinations (seeing things that are not actually real)
- seizures (fits) in the most serious cases

If you recognise the signs of physical dependence it is important that you;

DO NOT STOP DRINKING SUDDENLY - you may experience physical withdrawal complications.

DO NOT REDUCE DOWN TOO QUICKLY - you may experience physical withdrawal complications.

Deaths from liver disease have reached record levels, rising by 20% in a decade.

Alcohol is a causal factor in more than 60 medical conditions, including: mouth, throat, stomach, liver and breast cancers; high blood pressure, cirrhosis of the liver and depression.

The number of older people between the ages of 60 and 74 admitted to hospitals in England with mental and behavioural disorders associated with alcohol use has risen by over 150% in the past ten years.

Gradually reduce your drinking

Cutting down doesn't have to be complicated and reducing the amount you drink can be an effective stepping stone to giving up alcohol completely in the future.

Reducing the strength of your drinks can be a useful first step - If you drink a bottle of 13% wine try swapping to a 10% wine, if you drink cans of 5.5% lager try swapping to 4.5% lager, if you drink 7.5% cider try swapping to 6% cider.

Reducing the size of your drinks – swapping 500ml cans for 440ml cans, 1litre bottles for 70cl bottles.

Reducing the number of drinks – i.e. cutting down from 6 to 5 cans per night.

Reducing the number of units – keep a record of the number of units you drink per day and gradually reduce that total.

Detoxification options

For some people with severe dependence cutting down and stopping completely is simply not possible due to the risk of physical withdrawal complications.

A medically assisted detox is provided by the specialist alcohol service and can take place at home or in a dedicated detox unit lasting up to 2 weeks. The detox includes a period of preparation and structured aftercare activities to develop the coping skills required to remain abstinent. Medication to help prevent relapse can also be discussed.

Patients presenting at A&E with simple alcohol withdrawal will be referred to the specialist community team for a planned detox.

Detoxification in DRI is only offered where a patient has existing physical health problems requiring admission to an emergency hospital bed.

You are advised to continue drinking and reduce slowly to prevent complications while awaiting a planned detox.

The NHS estimates that around 9% of men in the UK and 3% of UK women show signs of alcohol dependence.

In England in 2014, 194,706 prescriptions for drugs to treat alcohol dependency were prescribed.

In England in 2013 there were 6,592 alcohol-related deaths.

Where to get help

Recovering from alcohol dependence is more likely to happen with a proper support network.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous is perhaps the most widely known program related to overcoming an addiction or chemical dependency. For decades, AA meetings have helped countless men and women overcome their dependence upon alcohol and begin their pursuit of lifelong recovery.

AA meetings are designed as supportive environments for individuals who are in all stages of recovery, as well as for those who are still drinking but have "a strong desire" to quit.

Doncaster has regular AA meetings where members can discuss their struggles with alcohol and meet people who understand how you feel overcoming alcohol dependency.

Saturday

Mind Centre, 27-29 Nether Hall Rd.
Time: 18.30 - duration 1hr 30mins
Postcode: DN1 2PG

Monday

Mind Centre, 27-29 Nether Hall Rd
Time: 19.30
Postcode: DN1 2PG

Tuesday

Rosslyn House 37 Thorne Rd.
Time: 10.45 - duration 1hr
Postcode: DN1 2EZ

Wednesday

Rosslyn House, 41 Thorne Rd, (Christ Church road entrance)
Time: 19.30
Postcode: DN1 2EZ

Aspire

Rosslyn House, 37 Thorne Road, Doncaster DN1 2EZ
Tel: (01302) 730956

This new integrated service aims to help Doncaster people who need information, support or treatment for their alcohol or substance misuse. You can self-refer or a family member or any health and social care professional can do it for you as long as they have your consent.

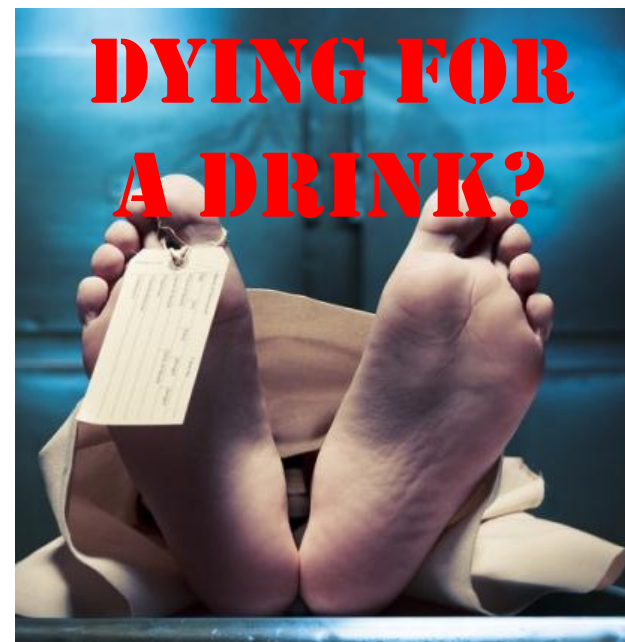
First contact and engagement with services is critical to a successful outcome. As such they have a dedicated and highly skilled team specifically for this part of the service.

The team is supported by peer mentors who are there to welcome people into Aspire and offer support and reassurance.

The Options day programme offers people who have registered with the service an opportunity to engage in relapse prevention, motivational groups, complementary therapies and one to one support. There is advice on a number of social and health related issues and there is always a friendly face

Drop-in Service

Mondays and Thursdays 9am to 7pm, Tuesdays and Fridays 9am to 5pm, Wednesdays 9am to 1pm.



A guide to
help you
overcome
dependence
from alcohol