

ALCOHOL ADDICTION

Alcohol addiction is a form of alcohol use that is characterised with the behaviour of not being able to control your drinking or continuing to consume alcohol even if it causes problems in your life. Individuals with this alcohol addiction have to consume more alcohol to achieve the same level of intoxication and experience withdrawal symptoms when they reduce alcohol use or stop consuming alcohol.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of alcohol addiction are as follows:

- Not being able to limit the amount of alcohol you consume
- Trying to reduce drinking alcohol but failing to do so
- Making great efforts to stop drinking alcohol
- Feeling an intense desire to drink alcohol when not drinking it
- Failing to fulfil important responsibilities at work, school or home due to repeated alcohol drinking
- Continuing to consume alcohol even though you know that it is damaging your health, causing problems at work and in your social and personal relationships
- Developing alcohol tolerance due to chronic and excessive alcohol use
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, sweating and tremors when you do not consume alcohol

Chronic alcohol abuse increases the risk of the following diseases or negatively affects disease course.

- **Liver Disease**
- **Digestive Problems**
- **Cardiovascular Diseases**
- **Sexual Dysfunctions**
- **Eye Diseases**
- **Cancer**

Treatment

As a first step of the treatment, it is important to identify the patient's overall level of alcohol use and the stage of current or potential health problems that the patient suffers or might suffer due to alcohol abuse. In order to plan the treatment process, the patient must undergo a doctor's examination.

Detox

Depending on the severity of alcohol addiction, the patient might be advised to undergo an alcohol detox. Patients with moderate withdrawal symptoms can be treated in an outpatient detox programme, but severe alcohol withdrawal requires outpatient treatment. Such programmes may also require the use of certain medications to minimise the alcohol withdrawal symptoms and treat other associated complications.

Behavioural Therapy

One of the most important steps to overcome your alcohol addiction is to get support from a specialist so as to better understand your relationship with alcohol and learn how to cope with life without consuming alcohol. Behavioural therapies can be effective in terms of teaching you the mechanisms of coping with mental and physical stress due to alcohol withdrawal in your body and improving your willpower to avoid relapse.

Translated into English by İlke Yalçın Alp