

Substance use disorders

Healthy Blue has a care program for substance use disorders. This program has been designed to provide a safe place where you are invited to learn more about and discuss success strategies for working through a substance use disorder. We are here to help you set health goals and create a care plan that fits your way of life. You do not have to join the program. You are signed up as a member of Healthy Blue.

Living with a substance use disorder

A substance use disorder is using drugs or alcohol even though using them causes health problems, a disability, or not meeting your daily work, school, or home duties. Drug or alcohol use can cause harm to yourself or others.

You can take control. If you would like, we will keep your doctor up to date. We will share your condition and the services we provide you. Your case manager can help you learn how to handle your substance use disorder.

Things to know

- Your brain will change after long use of drugs or alcohol. You may start to have cravings for the drug or alcohol.
- Common results of alcohol or drug abuse or dependence can include missing work or school often and neglecting family or children. Other outcomes are legal problems, auto accidents or the suspension of your driver's license. Other problems include the need for more of the substance, withdrawal symptoms, large amounts of time spent getting and using the drug, loss of friendships, or physical and psychological harm.
- Substance use disorders can be treated.
- We can share more information to help you with your substance use disorder.

How is a substance use disorder treated?

- The first step to treating a substance use disorder is to see a health care provider.
- A person with a substance use disorder may have other health conditions. Make sure to talk with your doctor about all your health conditions.
- A combination of treatments is usually most helpful in treating a substance use disorder. Some of the treatments are psychosocial or talk therapy, medication therapy, and community-based support.
- Talk to your doctor about all treatment options for substance use disorder and the best course of action for you.

What Can You Do?

You can help yourself by getting treatment and sticking with it. It takes time. Treatment is the best way to take care of a substance use disorder. Here are a few things you can do to help with your treatment:

- Talk with your doctor about your treatment – what’s going well and what isn’t
- Don’t take any new drugs, even over-the-counter drugs, until you check with your doctor first
- Set a goal for yourself that is reachable
- Stay in treatment
- Keep a daily routine healthy meals and a good night’s rest

Healthy Blue Case Managers are here to help you in:

- Talking to your family or caregiver about your substance use disorder.
- Finding group programs and resources in your area.
- Talking with your doctor and get the most out of your visit:
 1. Ask any questions you may have about your substance use disorder. You can write them down and take them with you to your visit.
 2. Follow your doctor’s advice. If you have questions or concerns, let your doctor know.
 3. Make sure your doctor knows what medicines you are taking.

How can family and friends help?

Family and friends play an important part in helping a person who has a substance use disorder. They will need to know as much as possible about the disorder. Family and friends also can help you to stay in treatment. To help someone with a substance use disorder, a friend or relative can:

- Encourage the person to stay in treatment
- Talk with the person and listen to what they have to say
- Include the person in fun activities
- Remind the person that getting better is possible with the right treatment
- Never ignore comments about suicide and let the person’s therapist or doctor know right away
- Family members may benefit from attending counseling together

Important screenings:

- Depression
- Other health conditions
- Preventive care screenings such as wellness checkups, mammograms and Pap tests
- Assessments related to alcohol or substance use; they consist of a few simple questions that you can complete in private with your primary care provider or specialist

If you feel like you want to hurt or if you feel like taking your own life:

Get help right away! Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) to talk to a trained counselor. The hotline provides free and confidential support to anyone feeling overwhelmed.

Friends and family can help to keep you safe by removing ways you can hurt yourself while you are in distress. Friends or family should call the treating psychiatrist or therapist or 911 if a person talks about or tries suicide.

For more helpful information on managing your substance use disorder:

- The National Institute of Mental Health 1-866-615-6464 (TTY 1-866-415-8051) www.nimh.nih.gov
- Mental Health America 1-800-969-NMHA (6642) www.nmha.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) www.nami.org
- Narcotics Anonymous www.na.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous www.aa.org

Sources:

* Alcohol and Drug Abuse Addiction Rehab Treatment Center
www.addict-help.com

* NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse
Topics in Brief: Drugs, Brains and Behavior: The Science of Addiction
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/topics-in-brief/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction>

* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
www.samhsa.gov

The information in this document is for educational purposes only. It is not to be used as medical advice.

Do you need help with your healthcare, talking with us, or reading what we send you? Call us toll free at 1-844-521-6941 (TTY 711) to get this for free in other languages or formats.

¿Necesita ayuda con su atención médica? ¿Necesita ayuda para leer lo que le enviamos o para hablar con nosotros? Llámenos al número gratuito 1-844-521-6941 (TTY 711) para conseguir esta información sin costo en otros idiomas o formatos.

Healthy Blue is the trade name of Community Care Health Plan of Louisiana, Inc., an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.