

SUBSTANCE USE OVERVIEW

In 2019, **20.4 million adults (aged 12 and older) had a substance use disorder (SUD)**.¹ Substance misuse is defined as the hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and drugs. Substance use is linked to negative **physical, social, and emotional** outcomes.

This document provides an overview of substance use, including standard drinks, lower-risk drinking limits, screening, treatment, and services, so you can learn more about your options. With these resources, you can better understand how your substance use may be affecting your **health and well-being**, and **what steps you can take** to improve your health.

Substance Use and Mental Health

Approximately **9.5 million** Americans have both a **SUD and a mental health (MH) disorder**.¹ MH disorders that commonly occur with SUD are depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and anxiety disorder. These **conditions are often connected** because MH disorders can contribute to a SUD, and a SUD can contribute to a MH disorder. For example, individuals may misuse substances to **self-treat or cope** with MH disorders. Similarly, drug and alcohol use can **worsen symptoms** of MH disorders. MH disorders and SUD also have **common risk factors**, such as early experiences of stress or trauma.^{2,3}

Treatment for both MH and SUD can include medications and counseling. **It is important to tell your doctor** if you are taking medications to treat SUD or MH disorders. You should also be careful using drugs or alcohol while taking medications to avoid negative side effects. Drug interactions can **increase the risk of overdose** and can lead to other **poor health outcomes**.

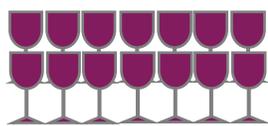
What is a Standard Drink?

A standard drink of pure alcohol in the United States (U.S.) is 0.6 fl. oz. or 14 grams. The percent of pure **alcohol varies by drink**. For example, a cocktail, like a martini, might have more pure alcohol than a light beer. Beers from microbreweries might have a higher alcohol percentage than a standard beer. **This means one beer, cocktail, or glass of wine could be more than one standard drink**. Consider the type of drink when calculating how many drinks you have each week.



What Are Lower Risk Drinking Limits?

The **lower risk drinking limits** are based on drinking “standard drinks”. Research shows that drinking above these limits puts you at **higher risk for harm, serious health issues, and developing a SUD**. Always consider your age and any other health conditions or medications when you drink alcohol. If you are planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding, the safest choice is **not to drink alcohol**.

	Men aged 65 and under	Men over age 65 & Women (any age)
Drinks per Week	<p>14 drinks or less</p> 	<p>7 drinks or less</p> 
Drinks per Occasion	<p>4 drinks or less</p> 	<p>3 drinks or less</p> 

Treatment and Recovery

About **23.5 million** individuals are in **recovery** from a SUD. Recovery is a process of change where individuals **improve their health and wellness**, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

Recovery from SUD is about the same as other chronic conditions. Patients receiving SUD treatment have **better treatment adherence and outcomes** compared to those with **other chronic illnesses**, like high blood pressure and diabetes (see Figures 1 & 2).^{2,3}

If you screened in a harmful or hazardous risk range, **you have treatment and services options** to support you to **stop or reduce** your use.

See the next section to learn more about your options and next steps.

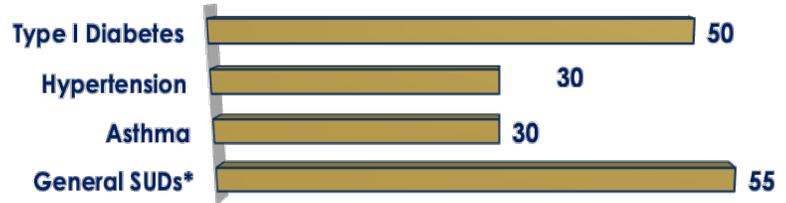


Fig 1: Treatment compliance rates for SUDs and other chronic diseases (%)



Fig 2: Treatment outcomes for SUDs and other chronic diseases (%)

Resources for Treatment and Services

The U.S. has over 14,500 specialized substance use treatment facilities that provide a variety of care options, including **counseling, behavioral therapy, medications for opioid use disorder treatment, case management**, and other forms of care.⁴ You can use the resources below to find a provider or treatment center near you.

- Talk to your **healthcare provider** about your alcohol and/or substance use.
- Contact your local **Single County Authority (SCA)** for assessments, referrals to treatment, treatment funding, and peer support services.
- Visit the **Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP)** website to find naloxone, treatment, and COVID-19 information. <https://apps.ddap.pa.gov/gethelpnow/>
- Visit Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) website to **find treatment services near you** and for more information on SUD.
 - **SAMHSA's National Helpline:** 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
 - <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-program-data/treatment-practitioner-locator>
- Attend a **support group** to receive help from peers and ongoing support
 - **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):** www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-aa-resources
 - **Narcotics Anonymous (NA):** www.na.org/meetingsearch/

Additional Resources:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1(800) 273-8255
- **National Crisis Hotline:** www.211.org or text your zip code to 898-211

References

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4. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Drug Addiction Treatment in the United States.