



# Signs Of Addiction (Alcohol, Marijuana, Opioids, Heroin, Benzodiazepines, Methamphetamines, Cocaine, Steroids)

Addiction is a serious disease that has affected thousands of Kentuckians over the years. According to the American Psychiatric Association, addiction is a complex brain disease manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequences. This means that once you get addicted to a substance, it can take over your life. You'll keep using it even though you may want to quit.

## Signs of Addiction



The signs of addiction vary depending on the drug being used. It typically results in a range of physical or behavioral signs that increase in severity the longer an individual is addicted.

Here are the signs of addiction to some of the common substances abused in Kentucky.

### Alcohol Addiction

Alcohol is one of the most widely abused legal substances in the state with Kentucky ranking 3rd in binge drinking in the country.

The signs of alcoholism include:

- Evidence of intoxication: slurred speech, poor decision making, loss of coordination, impaired attention and memory.
- Drinking at odd hours of the day e.g. in the morning.
- Ignoring or giving up other activities to drink.
- Excessive drinking on a regular basis (i.e. more than 7 drinks per week) often to the point of passing out or throwing up.
- Hiding the habit by drinking in secret
- Noticeable decline in health and appearance.
- Long-term health and mental problems including liver and kidney damage, insomnia and depression.

### Marijuana Addiction



Marijuana is often considered harmless but it's actually an addictive drug. The signs of being addicted to marijuana include:

- Evidence of intoxication: bloodshot eyes, mild euphoria, intense hunger i.e. the munchies, poor coordination
- Paranoia or anxiety triggered by marijuana use
- Increased dependence on marijuana to feel good or function normally
- Digestive problems if edibles are taken or lung problems if smoked
- Neglecting social responsibilities e.g. school, work, family to consume marijuana
- Withdrawal symptoms including nausea, insomnia, nightmares, lack of interest in food

### Opioid Addiction

Opioids are a class of drugs derived from opium. They include common painkillers such as Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, and Tramadol. Use of these substances is endemic in Kentucky and the signs of addiction are:

- Intoxication evidenced by constipation, euphoria, drowsiness, delirium, or appetite changes.
- Prioritizing drug use over other obligations in life.
- Stealing money to purchase more drugs.
- Changing how the drug should be taken e.g. instead of swallowing, the addict crushes or snorts it for a rapid high.
- Withdrawal symptoms that show up as flu symptoms if the person doesn't take the drug.
- Becoming desensitized to the drug so the person needs to keep increasing the dose to get the same effect.
- Doctor shopping to get more prescriptions as the individual runs out of opioids.



### Heroin Addiction

Heroin is a very addictive drug and there's a slippery slope between abusing it and getting addicted. Heroin addicts often become secretive about their addiction as it gradually takes over their lives.

Addiction signs to look out for include:

- Drug use paraphernalia among an individual's possessions e.g. needles, tubing, lighters, syringes, used spoons
- An inability to quit using even if they want to
- Withdrawal symptoms if they don't get their usual dose
- Signs of intoxication- euphoria followed by reduced consciousness and as this gradually wears off the individual experiences flushed skin, severe itching, slowed heart rate, and clouded thinking.
- Since the drug is injected, addicts often share needles exposing themselves to infections like HIV or hepatitis.

### Benzodiazepine Addiction

These are sedative drugs that have a calming effect on an individual. Unfortunately, they are also highly addictive and lead to a host of problems including:

- Cognitive impairment and confusion
- Headaches and difficulties breathing
- Physical weakness
- Appetite and weight changes
- Blurred vision
- Signs of intoxication similar to those of being drunk e.g. slurred speech, double/blurred vision, loss of coordination, memory loss
- Severe withdrawal symptoms e.g. seizures, insomnia, panic attacks



### Methamphetamine Addiction

These are potent synthetic drugs with serious side effects. They are highly addictive and take a heavy physical toll on the users.

Signs of addiction include:

- Meth mouth i.e. rotting teeth, gum damage, bad breath, dry mouth
- Tremors
- Hallucinations, paranoia and delusions of grandeur
- Changes in reflexes
- Elevated body temperature
- Changes in mood, aggression and irritability
- Reduced need for food or sleep
- Compulsive scratching or skin picking

### Cocaine Addiction

Cocaine is highly addictive because it releases excessive amounts of dopamine into the brain.

The common signs of addiction to cocaine include:

- Noticeably dilated pupils
- Excitability and excessive talkativeness after getting a hit
- Decreased appetite and sleep
- Elevated body temperature
- Raised blood pressure and increased heart rate that puts the addict at risk for stroke or a heart attack.
- Intense cravings that lead the addict to lie, steal or engage in other harmful behaviors to get the drug
- Tolerance to the drug so more is needed to attain the high
- Withdrawal symptoms when the high wears off including aggression, depression or anxiety, restlessness and insomnia.

### Steroid Addiction

Unlike other drugs we've listed here, steroids do not induce euphoria. Instead, they increase an individual's physical energy and muscle mass. The continuous use of steroids results in severe long-term health consequences.

Signs of steroid use and addiction include:

- Increased aggression and extroversion
- Changes in the individual's weight, breast size, and body hair
- Acne and baldness might occur
- A rapid increase in muscle mass
- Manic behavior
- Hallucinations and delusions.
- Long-term health consequences e.g. blood clots, liver cancer, stroke, heart attack, vein, or skin infections where the person injects the steroids. They could also contract hepatitis or HIV from sharing needles.

## We Can Give You the Help You Need

Addiction is a serious disease that not only affects the addict, but also their friends and loved ones.

Receiving the right help is crucial if one is to overcome addiction. Here at the [Robert Alexander Center for Recovery in Kentucky](#), we have a variety of [addiction treatment programs](#), qualified staff, and a conducive environment all geared towards helping individuals beat different kinds of addiction.

[Contact us today](#) and let us help you get started on your treatment journey.



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