What Makes Alcohol Addictive?

By The Professionals At Robert Alexander Center

So what makes alcohol addictive? Unlike other substances with a high abuse rate, alcohol does not carry the same stigma in our society as other drugs. In fact, alcohol seems ever-present in modern-day America.

In 2019, it was reported that over 85% of people over the age of 18 had consumed alcohol at some point in their life. Some people may often feel they have difficulty relaxing or having fun without the presence of alcohol. Others may have trouble functioning altogether if their dependence has become severe enough.

At the Robert Alexander Center, we can help you make the change. We believe in providing expert care for individuals in need. We've extended our drug and alcohol treatment to include mental health treatment as well. Mental health disorders and substance abuse are often tied together, referred to as co-occurring disorders. Our goal is to have you leave our facility healthy and with a stable foundation to rebuild upon. Contact us today to see how our treatment facility can support your transition to a healthier lifestyle.

What Is Alcohol?

Alcohol is the intoxicating ingredient in beer, wine, and liquor. Ethyl alcohol is a depressant and acts to suppress the functions in the central nervous system. It is mostly processed by the liver, but when excess amounts are taken in by the body, it can overload the system and cause extreme side effects.

Alcohol processes through the body at about one standard drink per hour. Binge drinking is when an individual consumes excessive amounts of alcohol in a short amount of time overloading the system. When this happens, individuals can experience the more severe side effects of drinking.

Drinking too much alcohol in a short amount of time can cause impacted judgment and reactions. This makes certain actions, such as driving, incredibly dangerous not only to the drinker but to those around them as well. A person taking in large amounts of alcohol is also more likely to become violent and is at risk for alcohol poisoning.

With these possible side effects, laws have been placed to protect people from alcohol use. Drinking age laws and laws against driving under the influence help protect not only the individual drinking but those around them from the damage it can cause.

What Makes Alcohol Addictive?

Alcohol is addictive because of how it impacts the body and brain. Individuals who become addicted to alcohol are addicted to the feeling it gives them. For example, a naturally shy person may become addicted to the lowered inhibitions created by alcohol use.

Signs of addiction are when tolerance is developed to a substance, and when a person experiences withdrawal symptoms after use ends. Tolerance is when the body requires more alcohol to produce the same initial effects of use. Drinking more to get the same feeling can cause additional damage to the body.

Withdrawal symptoms related to alcohol use can be severe. They include:

- Insomnia
- Sweating and rapid heart rate
- Mood swings and irritability
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Impacted cognitive skills
- Loss of appetite

While the majority of these symptoms are not deadly, they have the possibility of becoming deadly. Withdrawal and detoxification from alcohol use should always be monitored by a medical professional to ensure the safety of the individual.

How to Get Help with an Alcohol Addiction

The first step a person should take to get help with an alcohol addiction is to find a treatment facility with a detox center. When an individual can detox and go through initial treatment in the same location, they have dedicated support in place.

Addiction treatment for alcoholism can be done in several ways. While residential inpatient rehab is typically recommended for individuals detoxing and starting treatment for the first time, individuals with less severe addictions may be able to start treatment through an outpatient program.

In treatment, individuals get help with an alcohol addiction by attending different types of therapeutic treatment designed to teach coping skills, relapse prevention strategies, and other beneficial supports. Through this process, individuals will learn to identify triggers, how to manage stress, and address their other concerns in real-time.

Robert Alexander Center – Comprehensive Addiction Treatment in Kentucky

At the Robert Alexander Center, we have redefined treatment. By offering comprehensive addiction treatment, we support our clients from treatment throughout their rehabilitation and recovery.

Our treatment facility is designed with our clients in mind. From monitored detoxification through alumni care, we can support our clients through alcohol and drug addiction in addition to a number of co-occurring mental health disorders.

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