

Substance Use & Medication



Do you have a couple of drinks to lift your spirits when you are feeling down? Have you ever tried a friend's medicine, hoping it would help you feel better?

If so, you're not alone. Adults who suffer from feelings of depression are more likely to use alcohol or other drugs to feel better. Sometimes, this is called self-medicating. But there are serious risks with the misuse or abuse of drugs like over the counter medications, a friend's medicine, alcohol, marijuana or other illegal drugs. In fact, about 1 in 3 people with depression will also have a substance use problem at some points in their lives.

Did you know that substance abuse and depression affect the same areas of the brain?

Also, stress and trauma can sometimes lead to depression and substance abuse.

Alcohol is often used to mask the symptoms of depression. But using alcohol in this way may have the opposite effect and may make you feel worse. Alcohol is a depressant, meaning it alters the way that your brain works, affecting your thoughts and feelings.

Alcohol and other drugs often cause negative side effects and can increase the symptoms you hope to "numb."

If you have a family history of mental health disorders, drug and alcohol use may put you at a higher risk for mental health disorders.

Alcohol and other drug use can interact with medications, including antidepressants, anti-anxiety, and mood stabilizers, making them less effective.

Using recreational drugs to self-medicate for depression can cause you to struggle to regain the same level of happiness the drug gave you. You may then become more likely to keep using the drug or you may begin to depend on it to feel good.

There are serious risks to using alcohol or drugs to feel good that can and will result in you making poor decisions that can hurt you and those around you, can damage your relationships, career, and cause physical damage to your body.

Other actions like overeating or shopping to make you feel better are also forms of self-medication and can have negative effects on your life.

If you are self-medicating to feel better, think about these options...

Talk to someone close to you, a doctor or a therapist. They can help you better understand how using drugs or taking medicine on your own can cause more problems.

Be honest – tell your doctor about the medicines or drugs you are taking to feel better.

Work with your doctor to find the right medicine and amount that helps you feel better.

Talk to your doctor if you think you have a serious problem with alcohol or other drugs.

Think about seeing a therapist to help with your treatment for depression and/or substance abuse problems.

Join a self-help or peer support group like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.

Resources for Substance Abuse

Contact your Family Primary Care Physician or Therapist

If you are a resident of York or Adams County Pennsylvania and have questions on accessing treatment, you can contact the

York/Adams Drug and Alcohol Commission at (717) 771-9222 or at the [York/Adams Drug and Alcohol Commission](#) website

For Drug and Alcohol Assessments contact:

White Deer Run - York Assessment Center (WDR-YAC). Assessments can be scheduled by calling 717.771.2497 or if in

Crisis for Drug and Alcohol call the White Deer Run Call Center at 1-866-769-6822

Possible YouTube Site: [Depression & Self Medication Video](#)



It is very important to talk with a doctor about depressive symptoms you or your loved one are having. This website is not intended to replace a visit to a doctor.

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