



# ADDICTION

→ *Addiction is a slow but ongoing process. At the beginning, a person doesn't notice anything. As time goes on, bad relationships with family and friends, job stress, grief and loss and biological factors speed up the process. Over time, the person spends more time and money on alcohol, drugs, sex, smoking or gambling. Behaviours related to the addiction become a habit and involve psychological, as well as, chemical dependency.*

## REMEMBER

For assistance and connection to appropriate agencies, please speak to your primary care doctor who can also make a referral to a behavioural health consultant. The behavioural health consultant will provide support and guidance in getting you the services you need.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Alberta Health Services  
Addictions Helpline, 24 hour support & information:  
**Toll-free: 1.866.332.2322**

Please talk to your family doctor about PCN services.  
[edmontonsouthsidepcn.ca](http://edmontonsouthsidepcn.ca)



## DEGREES OF USE

Substance use falls on a duration based on frequency, intensity, and degree of dependency.

### EXPERIMENTAL

Use of substances is motivated by curiosity and limited to few exposures.

### SOCIAL / RECREATIONAL

The person seeks out and uses substances to enhance social occasions. Use is up and down and usually occurs with others.

### SITUATIONAL

In this stage, a definite pattern of substance use exists. The person associates it with a particular situation. Some loss of control can occur but the person is not yet experiencing negative consequences.

### INTENSIVE

The person uses substances in an intense manner. The person may consume a large amount of substances over a short period of time, or engages in continuous use over a period of time.

### DEPENDENCE

**Physical dependence** consists of tolerance (needing more of the substance for the same effect) or tissue dependence (cell tissue changes so the body needs the substance to stay in balance).

**Psychological dependence** occurs when the person needs to use the substance in particular situations or to function effectively. Degrees of dependence vary from mild to compulsive. Compulsive dependence is characterized as addiction.

## TREATMENT

Treatments allow the addicted person to learn how to substitute addictive behaviours with healthy ones. Treatment options include:

- In-patient treatment facilities
- Day programs
- Self-help meetings in the community

- Individual counseling
- In some cases, detoxification centres may be required to start more treatment.

Treatment may also be available to friends and family members who are affected by a loved one's addictive behaviour.