



Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, SUDs are treatable, chronic diseases characterized by a pattern of use of a substance or substances leading to impairments in health, social function, and control over substance use.

SUDs are a combination of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues using the substance despite harmful consequences. Patterns of symptoms resulting from substance use (drugs or alcohol) can help a doctor diagnose a person with an SUD or SUDs.

SUDs can range in severity from mild to severe and can affect people of any race, ethnicity, gender, income level, or social class.

Key Facts

- One in seven Americans aged 12 or older reports experiencing an SUD.
- SUD diagnosis can be applied to the following classes of drugs: alcohol; cannabis; hallucinogens; inhalants; opioids; sedatives, hypnotics, or anxiolytics; stimulants; tobacco (nicotine); and other (or unknown) substances.
- SUDs can lead to significant problems in all aspects of a person's life, including at work, school, or home.
- Coordinated care is critical in treating anyone with an SUD to achieve positive outcomes. Coordinating treatment for comorbidities, including mental health conditions, is an important part of treating an SUD.

Prevention Tips

- Education, awareness, and recognizing the signs of someone who may have an SUD can help prevent adverse consequences and even save a life.
- Be supportive. If you think you or someone you know needs help for substance use, talk to family members, friends, or a healthcare professional. Everyone can play a role to help their loved ones recover.
- Reduce stigma with simple changes in your language. Stigma can affect an individual's willingness to seek treatment or talk to a healthcare provider about their substance use.
- Recognize that people with SUDs may have other medical conditions, including mental health disorders, and should follow up with their physician on treatment options. For example, medications are available to treat mental health disorders, such as depression or anxiety, that may co-occur with an SUD.

