

## Why do people use alcohol and how can it affect them?

### People often use alcohol to:

- Relax and enjoy each other's company
- Feel more social, or sexually confident
- Rid the effects of the previous night's hangover
- Smooth the edge of cocaine, speed, crystal, and other stimulants
- Manage pain – related to either physical, mental or emotional health



### On the other hand, alcohol may lead to problems like:

- Liver disease – heavy alcohol use can cause scarring possibly resulting in cirrhosis
- Worsening symptoms of depression, and related mood or anxiety disorders
- Difficulty in relationships with friends, family, or partners due to binge drinking
- Accelerated hepatitis C disease progression

## Resources:

This behavioral health clinic offers medication to support you. Talk to your provider today.



### Other Resources

#### **Treatment Access Program**

1380 Howard St., San Francisco, CA  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 AM until 4:30 PM

24-Hour Helpline: (888) 246-3333  
TDD (888) 484-7200



San Francisco  
Department of Public Health

# Did you ever drink more than you wanted?



## *Did you know there are medications that can help?*



San Francisco Health Network  
Behavioral Health Services

## Should I be concerned?

In the past year, have you:

- Ended up drinking more, or longer than you intended?
- Wanted to cut down or stop drinking, or tried to, but couldn't?
- Continued to drink even though it was causing trouble with your family or friends?

If you checked any of these boxes talk to your counselor or doctor. There are more treatment options than ever before.

## Medication Options

Some of these medications have minimal side effects. Medications are available to help people **reduce** or **stop** their drinking and **prevent relapse**.



**Naltrexone** can help people reduce heavy drinking with few side effects.

**Acamprosate** makes it easier to maintain abstinence by reducing cravings.

**Disulfiram** (*Antabuse*) blocks the breakdown of alcohol by the body. This can help you stop drinking. It may make you feel sick if you do drink.

## What can I do on my own?

- Try not to keep alcohol at home.
- Avoid big trigger scenes for drinking.
- Try not to drink on an empty stomach, and drink slowly.
- Start with a non-alcoholic drink.
- See whether you can limit the **AMOUNT** you drink.
- **ROTATE** alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks (have a beer, then glass of water).
- Add ice to your drink.
- Cut down on how often you drink.



## How can I reduce my use?

- Naltrexone can help reduce drinking without needing to quit.
- Counseling can help change behavior.
- 12-step programs provide peer support for people quitting or cutting back on their drinking.

