



An Anthem Company

## **Substance use disorder**

Empire BlueCross BlueShield HealthPlus has a care management program for substance use disorder. This program will help you better understand and manage your substance use disorder. We can assist you to set health goals and create a care plan that fits your lifestyle.

## **Living with substance use disorder**

Substance use disorder is using drugs or alcohol in a way that causes harm to yourself or others.

We want you to know you can take control. If you like, we will keep your doctor informed of your condition and the services we provide you. Your case manager can help you learn how to better manage your substance use disorder.

### **Things to know**

- Your brain will change after using drugs or alcohol over time. You may start to have cravings for the drug or alcohol.
- Common results of abuse or dependence can include missing work or school often and neglecting family or children. Some other outcomes are legal problems, auto accidents or suspension of driver's license, needing more and more of the substance, withdrawal symptoms, large amounts of time spent getting and using the drug, and loss of friendships, as well as physical and psychological harm.
- The important thing to know about substance use disorder is that it can be treated.
- We can share more information to help you with substance use disorder.

### **How is substance use disorder treated?**

- The first step to treating substance use disorder is to see a health care provider.
- People with substance use disorder may have other health conditions. Make sure to talk with your doctor about all your health conditions.
- A combination of treatments is usually most helpful in treating substance use disorder. Some of the treatments are psychosocial or talk therapy, medication therapy, and community-based support.
- Talk to your doctor about other treatment for your substance use disorder.

### **What can you do?**

You can help yourself by getting treatment and sticking with it. It takes time, but treatment is the best way to take care of substance use disorder. Here are a few things you can do to help with your treatment:

- Talk to your doctor about your treatment.

- Don't take any new drugs, even over-the-counter drugs, until you check with your doctor first.
- Set goals for yourself that are reachable.
- Stay in treatment.
- Keep a daily routine by eating a healthy diet and sleeping at regular times.

### **Support to help you manage your substance use disorder**

- We can help you talk to your family or caregiver about your substance use disorder.
- We can assist you in finding community programs and resources in your area.
- Tips to talk with your doctor and get the most out of your visit:
  1. Ask any questions you may have about your substance use disorder. You can write them down and take them with you to your visit.
  2. Follow your doctor's advice. If you have questions or concerns, let your doctor know.
  3. Make sure your doctor knows what medicines you are taking.

### **How can family and friends help?**

Family and friends play an important part in helping a person who has substance use disorder. They will need to know as much as possible about the disorder. Family and friends also can help you stay in treatment. To help someone with substance use disorder, a friend or relative can:

- Encourage the person to stay in treatment.
- Talk with the person and listen to what they have to say.
- Include the person in fun activities.
- Remind the person that getting better is possible with the right treatment.
- Never ignore comments about suicide and let the person's therapist or doctor know right away.
- Family members may benefit from attending counseling together.

### **Important screenings:**

- Depression
- Other health conditions
- Preventive care screenings such as wellness checkups, mammograms and Pap tests
- Assessments related to alcohol or substance use; they consist of a few simple questions that you can complete in private with your primary care provider or specialist

### **If you feel like you want to hurt yourself:**

Get help right away! You can call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889) to talk to a trained counselor. Friends or family should call the treating psychiatrist or therapist or 911 if a person talks about or tries suicide.



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**For more helpful information on managing your substance use disorder:**

- The National Institute of Mental Health 1-866-615-6464 (TTY 1-866-415-8051) [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov)
- Mental Health America 1-800-969-NMHA (6642) [nmha.org](http://nmha.org)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) [nami.org](http://nami.org)
- Narcotics Anonymous [na.org](http://na.org)
- Alcoholics Anonymous [aa.org](http://aa.org)

Sources:

\* Alcohol and Drug Abuse Addiction Rehab Treatment Center  
[addict-help.com](http://addict-help.com)

\* NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse  
Topics in Brief: Drugs, Brains and Behavior: The Science of Addiction  
[drugabuse.gov/publications/topics-in-brief/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction](http://drugabuse.gov/publications/topics-in-brief/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction)

\* Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)  
[samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov)

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