

# What Are the Symptoms of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)?

Healthcare professionals use criteria from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), to assess whether a person has AUD and to determine the severity if the disorder is present.

Severity is based on the number of criteria a person meets based on their symptoms: **mild (2-3 criteria), moderate (4-5 criteria), or severe (6 or more criteria).**

A healthcare provider might ask the following questions to assess a person's symptoms.

## In the past year, have you:

- Had times when you ended up drinking more, or longer, than you intended?
- More than once wanted to cut down or stop drinking, or tried to, but couldn't?
- Spent a lot of time drinking? Or being sick or getting over other aftereffects?
- Wanted a drink so badly you couldn't think of anything else?
- Found that drinking—or being sick from drinking—often interfered with taking care of your home or family? Or caused job troubles? Or school problems?
- Continued to drink even though it was causing trouble with your family or friends?
- Given up or cut back on activities that were important or interesting to you, or gave you pleasure, in order to drink?
- More than once gotten into situations while or after drinking that increased your chances of getting hurt (such as driving, swimming, using machinery, walking in a dangerous area, or having unprotected sex)?
- Continued to drink even though it was making you feel depressed or anxious or adding to another health problem? Or after having had a memory blackout?
- Had to drink much more than you once did to get the effect you want? Or found that your usual number of drinks had much less effect than before?
- Found that when the effects of alcohol were wearing off, you had withdrawal symptoms, such as trouble sleeping, shakiness, restlessness, nausea, sweating, a racing heart, or a seizure? Or sensed things that were not there?

Any of these symptoms may be cause for concern. The more symptoms, the more urgent the need for change.

## Need Help?

If you are concerned about your alcohol use and would like to explore whether you might have AUD, please visit the Rethinking Drinking website: [rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov](https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov)

To learn more about alcohol treatment options and search for quality care near you, please visit the NIAAA Alcohol Treatment Navigator: [alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov](https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov)