



ADDICTION | SWITZERLAND

PROTECT YOUR HEALTH!



**ALCOHOL | TOBACCO | CANNABIS | PRESCRIPTION
MEDICATION | GAMBLING | DRUGS**

englisch | anglais | inglese

PREVENTION | HELP | RESEARCH



ALCOHOL, CANNABIS, DRUGS: A SOLUTION TO YOUR PROBLEMS?

Some people claim that alcohol, cannabis or other drugs helps them:

- Feel better
- Forget about their problems
- Integrate within a group of friends
- Pass time
- Fall asleep

These substances may **give you the impression** that your problems have gone away for some time. But they aren't a solution. **On the contrary, they create other problems.**

There are other ways to feel better and face your problems:

- Spending time with friends or family
- Speaking about your problems
- Moving, walking
- Doing an activity that gives you pleasure
- Learning new things

If you are feeling too depressed, if your problems seem too important, don't isolate yourself. Speaking to someone can help you feel better.



«BEING ADDICTED»: WHAT IS IT/WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Many **substances** can cause addiction: alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, drugs, medication. You can also become addicted to **behaviours**, for example using internet or gambling.

When a person is addicted:

- They cannot stop consuming.
- They feel bad when they cannot consume.
- They constantly need to consume more.

Even if consumption has negative effects on one's physical and mental health, on one's social life, a person who is addicted carries on consuming.

Being addicted, means losing your freedom.

Many people are ashamed. They don't dare speak about their consumption problem.

Addiction is a disease; not a question of willpower. You can get treated. Ask for help!

WHAT IS LEGAL? WHAT IS FORBIDDEN?

Tobacco and alcohol?

Tobacco and alcohol are **legal** substances in Switzerland.

But it is **forbidden** to:

- Sell tobacco to young people under 16/18 years old (depending on the canton).
- Sell alcohol to young people under 16 or hard liquor to minors.
- Smoke in indoor public places (bars, trains, restaurants, etc.).

Cannabis, cocaine, heroine, khat, amphetamine, etc.

These drugs are **illegal**.

People who sell, consume or possess such drugs are punishable by law. In certain cases, this can get in the way of obtaining a residence permit.

Driving a car or a bike

On the road, drivers can be punished by law if they have:

- More than 0.5 per mill of alcohol in their blood (or 0.25 mg/l in the air exhaled)
- Consumed cannabis or other illegal drugs or certain prescription medication





ALCOHOL, A DRINK LIKE OTHERS?

In Switzerland, alcohol is readily available. We can see it in shops, bars, adverts or television.

Even so, alcohol isn't a beverage like others!

- Alcohol is bad for your health.
- Alcohol can lead to dependence.
- Alcohol increases the risk of accidents.
- Drinking too much alcohol can lead you to do things you might regret (violence, risk-taking)

Alcohol should be avoided by:

- Young people
- Pregnant women
- People who take medication
- Before driving your car or your bike
- Before going to work

To protect your health, it is advised to drink at most:

For a man in good health:

2 glasses a day

For a woman in good health:

1 glass a day

1 glass

= around 3dl of beer

= around 1 dl of wine

= around 2cl of spirits

Most days of the week, men and women shouldn't drink at all.



CIGARETTES, SHISHA ...: SMOKING HARMS YOUR HEALTH

Smoking harms your health.

It damages your organs (lungs, heart, etc.) and increases risk of diseases. Nicotine contained within tobacco can very quickly make you dependent.

Stopping: It is possible ...

... but it is often difficult. You must sometimes try many times before succeeding.

There are many advantages to quitting smoking:

- You protect your health
- You save money
- You are less short of breath and in better physical shape.

You have decided to quit smoking?

Here's some advice:

- Stopping in groups is often more motivating.
- Make a list of all the benefits there are to quitting smoking.
- Fix a date to stop. After that, never touch a cigarette again.

If you have doubts or need advice, speak to a health professional or call the helpline Stop-tabac (0848 000 181 – free number).

Protect others!

Passive smoking is also dangerous for your health. To protect your loved ones, don't smoke inside.



MEDICATION: WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Medication helps you get better, to relieve pain, feel better or even to sleep. Certain medications are prescribed by the doctor. Others can be bought freely.

Sometimes, medication can also make you addicted. If they are not taken correctly, they can pose a risk.

To protect your health:

- Don't take medication without having spoken about it to a doctor.
- If you are taking other drugs, tell your doctor.
- If you are taking medication, don't consume alcohol or take drugs.
- Ask a doctor if you can drive a car or a bike with the medication you take.

Sleeping pills: there are other solutions!

Sometimes it is difficult to fall asleep ...

Before taking sleeping pills, simple and natural methods exist, for example:

- Doing breathing exercises and relaxing, having a warm cup of tea.
- Speaking about your problems with someone, seek help.

Alcohol shouldn't be used as a sedative. Even if it gives you the impression it helps you sleep, it disturbs your rest.



LET'S PROTECT YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH

Children and young people shouldn't consume alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

In young people, the body and organs, notably the brain, are still developing. Tobacco, alcohol and drugs can disturb this development.

Young people have many things to learn: At school and in the professional world, in social relations, they must also construct their own identity. Alcohol, tobacco or drugs will not help them.

In fact, to protect them, the law forbids selling tobacco and alcohol to young people.

Adults have the responsibility of setting the example for young people:

- Showing moderate alcohol consumption.
- Not encouraging them to consume
- Explaining the risk of consumption to them.
- Showing them other ways than alcohol or drugs to manage their problems.



«I'M EXPECTING A CHILD.» «I'M BREASTFEEDING MY CHILD.»

During pregnancy and breastfeeding, everything the mother consumes reaches the baby: through the placenta during pregnancy and through breast milk during breastfeeding.

Also, alcohol, toxic chemicals from cigarettes, medication and drugs are dangerous for the child.

To protect your child's health during pregnancy and breastfeeding, it is recommended:

- Not to smoke
- Not to consume alcohol or drugs
- Speaking to a doctor before taking medication

At any moment, quitting drinking or smoking is positive for the mother and for the child.

Quitting during pregnancy or breastfeeding can be something difficult. If it is your case, speak about it to a health professional.



WINNING MONEY THROUGH GAMBLING?

Certain people play money games (scratch cards, sport bets, casino games, etc.) as their hobby.

These games **make you think** you can earn a lot of money quickly, with little effort. It can be tempting to earn some money in this way, especially when you are in a tight financial situation. But often, people who play these games **lose more than they earn**.

Some people can even **lose control** of the game and become dependent:

- They bet a lot of money compared to their means.
- They play increasingly often.
- They play to forget their problems.
- They lie to their loved ones.
- They borrow money to play.

Money therefore harms their family, their finances, their health, their social lives.

Much like alcohol addiction, **gambling addiction is a disease**.

For people who have gambling problems, it is important that they speak to a professional.



«DO I HAVE A PROBLEM?»

- How do you feel when you don't consume (alcohol, tobacco, games etc.)? Do you feel bad, in your body or head?
- Do your loved ones tell you to consume less?
- Have you already had problems linked to your consumption?
- Does your consumption harm your relationship with friends or your family?
- Do you sometimes consume to forget about your problems?
- Do you consume despite the negative effects (on your health, your social and family life)?

If you answer YES to one or many of these questions, you might have a consumption problem.

Don't isolate yourself. Speak to someone who is close to you (family, friend) or a health professional.



«I HAVE A CONSUMPTION PROBLEM. WHAT SHOULD I DO?»

Seeking help is courageous. It is often the first step towards getting better and understanding what is happening to you.

Health professionals are bound to secrecy. Anything you tell them is confidential.

There is help online as well as applications that offer help to stop consuming.

If this isn't enough, you can seek help with a health professional (doctor, nurse, psychotherapist, etc.). They can inform you and guide you towards specialised services.

Most consultation services that specialise in addiction are free.

A LOVED ONE HAS CONSUMPTION PROBLEMS. HOW CAN YOU HELP THEM?

When someone has consumption problems or with gambling, this can also affect their family and friends.

Your husband consumes a lot of alcohol? Your wife takes a lot of medication? Your child regularly consumes cannabis? Your friend spends all their money on sport bets?

You are not responsible for other people's consumption. You won't be able to decide to get help in their place.

- Speak about it in the first person for example «I am worried about you»
- Explain your observations: «I have noticed that you drink every day / I have noticed that you aren't the same person when you smoke cannabis.»
- Tell the person about your worries: «I am worried about you».
- Think about yourself and your own needs.
- Set your limits.
- Set limits to protect yourself (for example: «I won't go out with you if you've drunk»; «I won't lend you money to play games»).

**Don't remain silent.
Speak to someone about what you are experiencing. Ask for help.**

For more information,
visit our website www.addictionsuisse.ch

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