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Debunking Medical Myths: Alcohol Addiction

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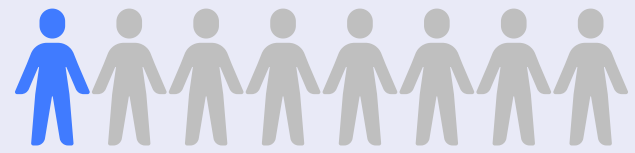
Alcohol Addiction



It's not just a choice.

12.6%

Of adults exhibit high-risk drinking behaviors³



Almost 1 in 8

Adults 18 and older in the US struggle with alcohol use disorder³

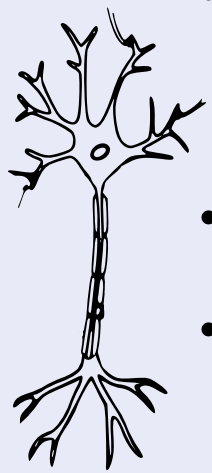
Genetics of Addiction

- Alcohol use disorders are approximately 50% heritable, meaning they can be passed down through an individual's DNA.⁶
- Individuals with genes that lead to a "low-level response" to alcohol experience lessened intoxicating effects and are more likely to have escalated drinking behaviors, which has been related to future issues with heavy alcohol consumption.⁴
- Family, twin, and adoption studies have demonstrated the heritability of alcohol dependence and alcohol abuse disorders.⁶



What Happens in Your Brain

- Drinking:** Alcohol releases dopamine, triggering the reward center of your brain and causes it to associate alcohol and the settings you consume it in with pleasure⁸
 - Chronic Use:** The more you drink, the more alcohol you need to release the same amount of dopamine and get the same reward.⁸ Chronic use disrupts the balance between excitatory and inhibitory signals in the brain.^{2,4}
 - Craving:** In an addicted brain, the stimuli for drug consumption (such as a stressful day) release dopamine, causing you to seek out alcohol.^{2,8}
 - Lack of Control:** The pre-frontal cortex, our brain's regulatory center is under-active in an addicted brain, making it less able to overcome cravings.⁸
 - Withdrawal:** Symptoms can be severe and require medical intervention.²



How to Get Help

How to help a friend who's struggling:

Brief interventions
Motivational interviewing
Support groups¹



FDA approved treatments:¹



Disulfiram
Acamprosate
Naltrexone

SMART Recovery

Life beyond addiction: **1 (800) 622 - HELP**

**Alcoholics Anonymous
24/7 hotline:
(313) 831-5550**

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