

Addiction is when that “thing” becomes the major focus of your life, and when it gets to the point that you don’t do other things or it harms you or someone else physically, mentally or socially.

What to look for

So how do you know? Pay attention when you or someone you care about:^{1,2,4,5}

- » Becomes obsessed with an activity, substance, object or behavior.
- » Seeks it out even when it causes physical problems, work or study issues, or conflict with friends and family.
- » Does it over and over again or can't stop.
- » Has withdrawal symptoms: jumpiness, trembling, sweating, nausea/vomiting, insomnia, depression, irritability, fatigue, loss of appetite or headaches.
- » Doesn't feel in control of when, how long, or how much with the activity, substance, object or behavior.
- » Hides it / denies a problem with it.
- » Experiences a blackout doing it.
- » Is depressed or has extreme mood swings.
- » Neglects activities that were once really important.
- » Has an extreme change in appearance, eating habits or energy.
- » Takes serious or unnecessary health risks.
- » Has a family history of addiction.
- » Comes from a family that was mentally or physically abusive; has low self-esteem.

Addiction changes how your brain works

These brain changes can lead to harmful and self-destructive behaviors. And just like diabetes, heart disease or other chronic conditions, it needs continuing long-term care.⁶

Consider home life

Research suggests a higher risk for addiction