



Beacon Education

Supporting world-wide community education

Addictions

What is addiction?

Addiction is when you have a need or urge to do something or use something, even if it causes harm.

Addiction is a powerful force that can take control of a person's life, affecting their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Addiction often stems from underlying emotional pain, trauma, or mental health issues.

Addiction often starts as a temptation that gradually grows into a powerful stronghold in a person's life.

Types of addictions

Substance addiction such as:

- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Smoking



Types of addictions

Non-substance addiction such as:

- Gambling
- Shopping
- Pornography
- Internet games
- Collecting things



Drugs

- Drugs are chemical substances which change the way the body functions.
- Drugs change the way a person behaves and feels.
- Drugs can be legal or illegal.



Legal Drugs

- A pharmaceutical drug which may be prescribed by a doctor for an illness.
- A pharmaceutical drug is prescribed to relieve the symptoms of pain or illness.
- However, over the long term, pharmaceutical drugs may have negative side effects.
- Tobacco and alcohol are legal drugs.
- Kava is a legal drug.
- Even caffeine is a drug, (coffee, cola drinks)

Illegal Drugs

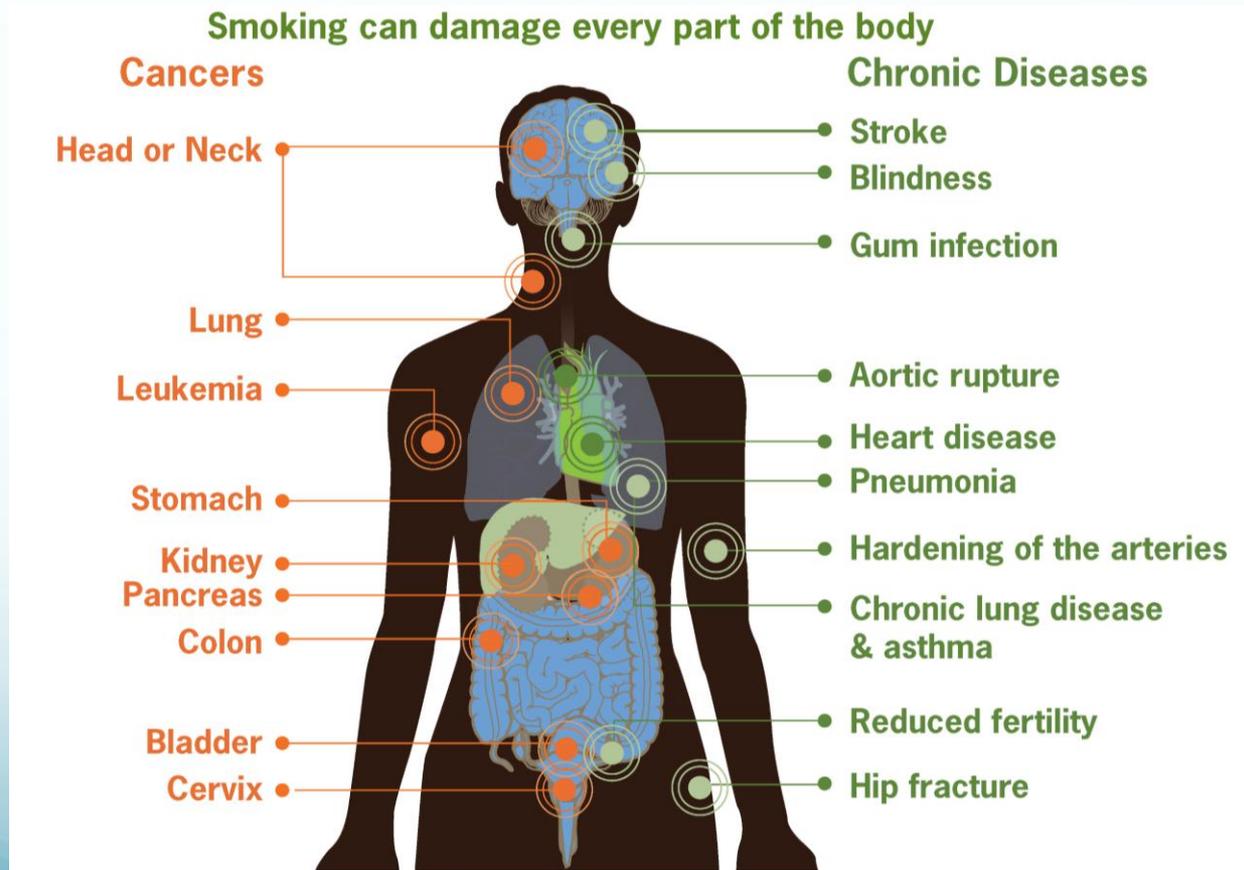
- Opium based drugs such as Heroin and Cocaine
- Ecstasy
- Cannabis (also called Marijuana)



Tobacco

- Smoking tobacco damages your health and makes you more vulnerable to:

- Heart disease
- Heart attacks
- Cancer
- Strokes



Other side effects of tobacco

- yellow teeth
- bad breath
- body odour
- smelly clothes
- a waste of money
- food doesn't taste as good
- you quickly become out of breath when you exercise



Alcohol

Reasons why people drink alcohol:

- Experiment
- Socialize with friends
- Relieve boredom
- Calm themselves down
- Forget worries or problems



Short-term problems caused by excess drinking

- Hangovers
- Nausea
- Shakiness
- Vomiting and memory loss
- Injury to yourself
- Alcohol poisoning



Long-term problems caused by excess drinking

- Significant damage to the brain and liver
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat or esophagus
- Possible increased risk of heart problems
- Emotional and mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety
- Increased possibility of acting in a violent way.
- Alcohol and tobacco cause more deaths than any other drug.

Danger warning signs - CAGE

- **C** – Have you ever felt that you ought to **C**UT down on drinking?
- **A** – Have people **A**NNOYED you by criticizing your drinking?
- **G** – Have you ever felt bad or **G**UILTY about drinking?
- **E** – Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning as an **E**YE-OPENER?

Other questions to assess whether you have a problem

- Have you had a memory lapse or black-out due to drinking?
- Do you continue to drink even though you have health problems caused by alcohol?
- Do you get withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, chills, shakes and strong cravings for alcohol, and then drink more to get rid of these symptoms?
- Do you drink alone?

Risks of Kava

Problems when consumed excessively over a long period of time:

- Liver damage – liver failure in extreme cases
- Skin problems
- Slows brain function



Other negative effects of kava addiction

- Over time, the body becomes less responsive to the effects of kava, leading to consumption of larger amounts to get the desired effect
- Can cause strained relationships
- Decline in performance at work or school
- Neglecting important responsibilities and obligations.

Withdrawal symptoms

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Muscle tremors

Does pharmaceutical kava have benefits

Yes – when manufactured in tablet form, the elements causing negative effects on health have been extracted.

Pharmaceutical kava can be of help to people suffering from anxiety and insomnia.



Cannabis - Short-term effects

- Social misfit – you may feel talkative and relaxed, then tend to laugh and giggle at things that are not funny to other people.
- Snacking - cannabis increases the appetite and causes users to want to snack on junk food.
- Lack of coordination, increased pulse rate, decreased blood pressure, bloodshot eyes and a dry mouth.



Cannabis – Long-term effects

- Mental illness
- Affects short-term memory
- Can't concentrate; lose track of what you are saying
- Confusion, restlessness, worry or panic.
- Hallucinations - see, hear, feel, taste or smell something that is not there.

What about medical use of cannabis?

- It can help in certain situations, for pain relief.
- Medicinal cannabis is processed in a way so as to minimise hallucinating effects.



Hard Drugs

- Heroin is a painkilling drug.
- Gives the user a sense of warmth and wellbeing.
- Highly addictive – so even a small dose will make you want more
- Users find they want more and more to feel normal
- High doses can cause the user to enter a coma and even be fatal.



Withdrawal symptoms and dangers

- Aches, hot and cold sweats, sneezing and spasms which peak after about three days.
- Extremely dangerous.
- Can lead to damaged veins, gangrene, higher risk of HIV and hepatitis.
- Overdose can cause death.
- Can rule a person's life so they end up stealing and committing other crimes just to get the money for the next fix.

Other types of addictions

- Gambling
- Internet games
- Shopping (or addiction to getting “stuff”)
- Pornography
- ANY addiction can take you away from valuable, more useful things to do in life. If you are addicted to something, you are letting something else TAKE CONTROL of you.

Discussion or Reflection

- Who should be in control of your life?
- How much better would a life be, when free of addiction?

Overcoming Addictions

Prayer

- Through prayer we ask for God's healing power, and we seek His strength and guidance to resist temptation.
- **Philippians 4:6-7:** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Meditation

- By meditating on Scripture, we allow God's truth to penetrate our hearts and minds
- This helps us to trust God and have faith in His ability heal us..
- Daily prayer and meditation as we recover, builds a deeper connection with God and renews strength for the journey.



Build a support system

- Family and friends who you can be open with
- Find a mentor – someone who you respect and trust
- Support groups – where is it safe to share your struggles



Seek help

- Counsellors will help you work through things and stay on track.
- Churches are a good place to find counsellors, and people who can walk the journey with you. Christians have a responsibility to do this. The Bible instructs Christians to:

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

Identify triggers

- If your addiction is alcohol, don't go to restaurants that serve alcohol.
- If your addiction is internet gaming, don't go to those internet sites. Limit your screen time.
- If your addiction is gambling, avoid joining people in these interests.

Set boundaries

- If there are people who may cause you to fall back into your addiction, avoid them until you are strong enough.
- Be friendly, but don't go out with them to places where you might be tempted.

Celebrate successes and overcome set backs

- If it's substance addiction, set a target date and gradually wean yourself off.
- A slip-up doesn't mean that you've failed; it's just a temporary setback. The key is to keep trying.
- Celebrate your successes. Look back at how you used to be and give thanks.



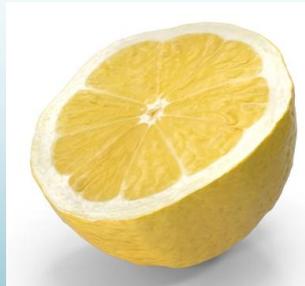
Develop coping mechanisms

- Keep busy with activities that are purposeful.
- Make time to engage in hobbies you enjoy.
- Take care of yourself and make sure you are eating a balanced diet, getting enough exercise, and getting plenty of sleep.



Overcoming substance addiction

- Prepare yourself for what you will probably experience and get mentally prepared.
- If trying to give up smoking, chew on a cinnamon stick, suck a lemon or drink a glass of water. These have been proven to help when you feel cravings.
- Physical activity can help. Go for a walk.



Bible verses to help overcome addictions

- **Philippians 4:13** - I can do all this through him who gives me strength.
- **Isaiah 40:29** - He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
- **Romans 8:37** - In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
- **Isaiah 41:10** - Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.