You Can Overcome Addiction

Drugs serve an important purpose in our lives. They provide the painkilling relief needed when recovering from an accident or surgery, or can help overcome depression or anxiety. But drugs also can be addicting, causing irreversible damage to the brain and body, and causing other serious problems for addicts and the people who care about them.

Addiction, whether to drugs or alcohol, has major consequences. Other addictions, such as Internet use or gambling, have powerful consequences as well.

This issue of *Your Source* looks at addiction—the costs and consequences of addiction as well as resources for care and treatment.

Warning Signs of Addiction

Not everyone who uses drugs or alcohol becomes addicted to them. Below are some warning signs to watch out for; if observed, consider seeking help:

- Refusing to acknowledge having an addiction problem, even though others can see it.
- Behaving in destructive or dangerous ways, doing things the person would probably never do if he or she were not on drugs or alcohol.
- Continuing to use drugs or drink even though it is harming them (making medical problems worse, creating legal or financial troubles or damaging relationships).
- Abandoning friends, favorite activities, school, job and even cherished relationships, so they can focus on buying and using drugs or alcohol.

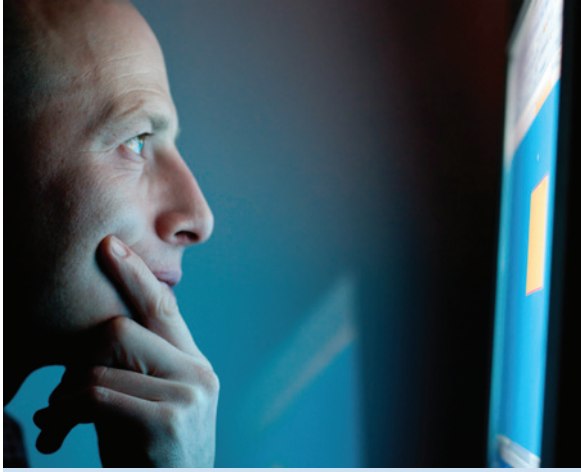
The good news is that help is available—and treatment works.

Go Online Today!

Log on to your program's website to access Addiction Awareness and other helpful resources in the Spotlight section. Log on now and register with your program's toll-free number.

Western Health Advantage
1-800-424-1778

Log on here!



Which items are **NOT** ingredients in methamphetamine?

A. Battery acid
B. Household drain cleaner
C. Camping lantern fuel
D. Antifreeze

Check your answer on the bottom.

Now That's an Idea!

Sources of Hope and Help
Want more information or help for addiction? Check out these resources:

Magellan Health Services
www.MagellanHealth.com/member

Substance Abuse Treatment Locator
1-800-662-HELP
www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Alcoholics Anonymous
(212) 870-3400
www.aa.org

Narcotics Anonymous
(818) 773-9999
www.na.org

Al-Anon
1-888-4AL-ANON
www.al-anon.alateen.org

The Center for Internet Addiction
www.netaddiction.com

Gamblers Anonymous
(213) 386-8789
www.gamblersanonymous.org

Answer: All are used as ingredients in meth. No wonder meth can cause death or convulsions, strokes and coma. *SAMHSA Tips for Teens: Methamphetamine*

Internet Addiction

The Internet is an indispensable tool for work, education and communication. While time spent on the Internet can be hugely productive, for some people compulsive Internet use can interfere with daily life, work and relationships.

If you feel more comfortable with your virtual friends than your real ones, or you can't stop playing games, gambling or endlessly surfing, you may be using the Internet too much. Learn about the signs and symptoms of Internet addiction and how you can get balance back in your online life.

What is Internet Addiction or Computer Addiction?

Internet addiction, otherwise known as computer addiction, online addiction or Internet addiction disorder (IAD), covers a variety of impulse-control problems, including:

- **Cyber-relationship addiction**—addiction to chat rooms, social networking and messaging to the point where online friends become more important than real-life relationships with family and friends.
- **Cybersex addiction**—compulsive viewing of Internet pornography, adult chat rooms or adult role-play sites to the point where it negatively impacts real-life intimate relationships.
- **Net compulsions**—such as compulsive online gambling, stock trading or online auction sites, often resulting in financial and work problems.
- **Computer gaming addiction**—obsessive playing of computer games.

The most common Internet addictions are cybersex, online gambling and cyber-relationship addiction.

Helping a Child with an Internet Addiction

If your child is showing signs of Internet addiction, here are steps you can take to help:

- Encourage other interests and social activities. Get your child out from behind the computer screen and into other hobbies and activities, such as team sports, Scouts and afterschool activities.
- Monitor computer use and set clear limits. Make sure the computer is in a common area of the house where you can keep an eye on your child's online activity, and limit time online.
- Talk to your child about underlying issues. Compulsive computer use can be the sign of deeper problems. Is your child having problems fitting in? Has there been a recent major change that is causing stress?
- Get help. Don't be afraid to seek professional counseling if you are concerned about your child.

Living Healthy Working Well®

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Tips for Dealing with Internet Addiction:

Ask yourself, "What am I missing out on when I spend so much time on the Internet?" Write these activities down and decrease your time online to do some of these activities.

Set a reasonable Internet use time limit and stick to it. Take frequent breaks, at least five minutes each hour, to do some other activity.

Alter your routine to break your usage patterns. If you spend evenings on the Internet, start limiting your use to mornings.

Stay connected to the offline world. Visit newsstands, book and music stores, and participate in entertainment such as museums, music and live theater. Novels and poetry readings are hard to experience online.

Treat the Internet as a tool. Stay focused on the fact that the Internet is a means to an end. Plan your strategy with the end in mind—whether you're looking for information or entertainment—and you'll save valuable time.

Source: University of California Human Resources, San Francisco

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