



ALCOHOLISM

AND FAMILY



Yellowstone Recovery
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GENETIC INFLUENCE

- Research published in the Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment found that genetics explain the risk of alcoholism by about 50%, while environmental factors and lifestyle interactions account for the other 50%.¹
- Some studies have indicated that family members of an alcoholic are three to four times more likely to develop alcoholism than individuals with no alcoholic family members.²

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Researchers believe a person's risk for developing alcoholism increases if he or she is in a family that includes:

- Two parents who abuse alcohol or other drugs.
- An alcoholic parent who is depressed or has other psychological problems.
- Alcohol-related conflicts that lead to violence and aggression in the family.





THE ODDS

In 2006, a study by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism found that the age an individual begins drinking could greatly affect their lifetime alcohol use and alcoholic episodes.³ The study reported that each additional year before age 21 that an adolescent began to drink meant greater odds for that individual to develop alcohol dependence at some point in life.

- Nearly half (46%) of drinkers who developed alcohol dependence began drinking at age 16 or younger.
- On the other hand, only 9% of individuals who began drinking at age 21 or older became addicted to alcohol.
- In general, early drinking was also associated with increased risk of having multiple episodes of alcoholism later in life.

STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

If you or a family member is worried about the influence of alcohol in your family, there are ways to get help.

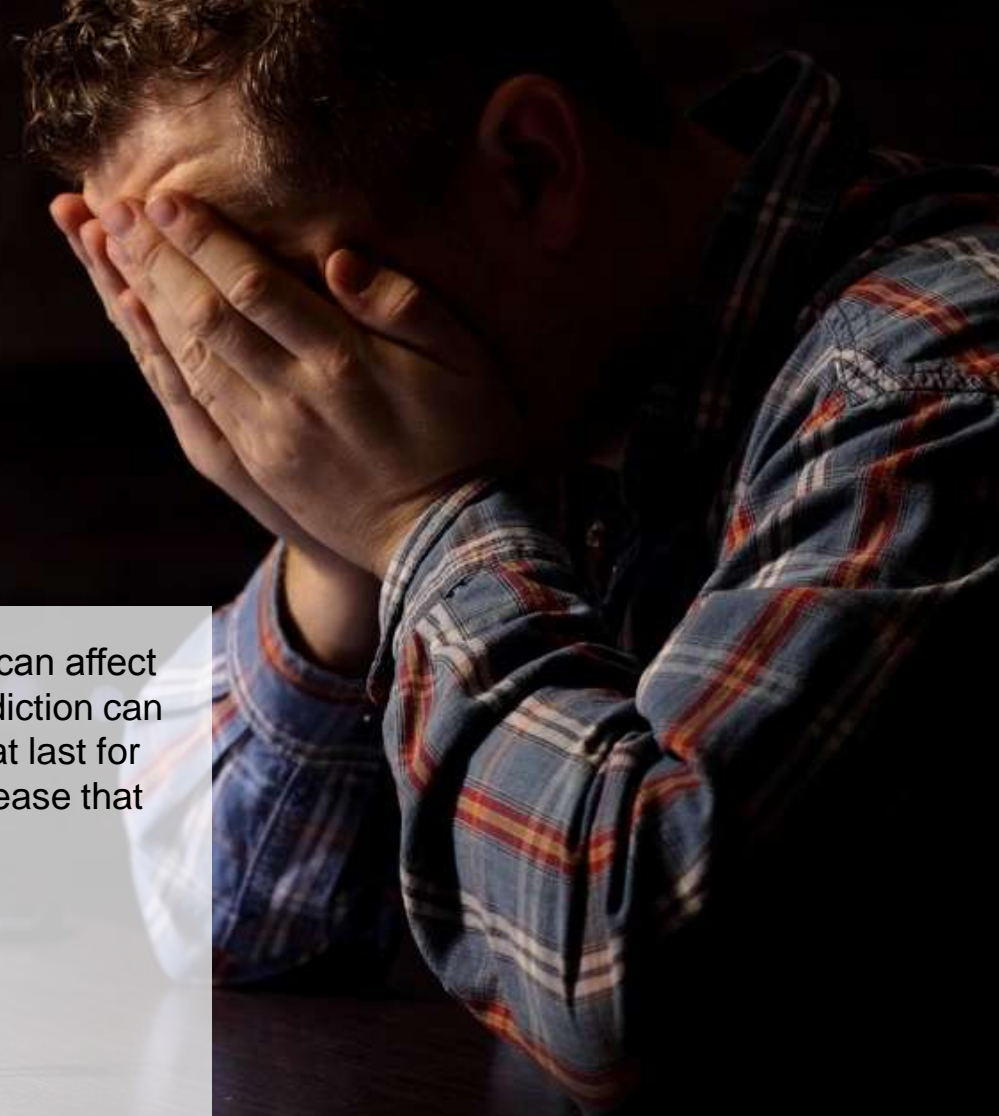
- Avoid underage drinking – not only is it illegal, but studies show that the risk for alcoholism is higher among people who begin to drink at an early age.
- Drink in moderation as an adult, but remember that maintaining moderate drinking habits may be harder for people with a family history of drinking problems.
- Talk to a professional, such as a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider, if you think you or a family member might be in trouble.
- Get recommendations for groups, rehabilitation centers, or organizations that can help monitor drinking or get to the root of what's causing the addiction.



ADDICTION AFFECTS THE WHOLE FAMILY

Just one family member's addiction to alcohol can affect everyone in the entire family. Without help, addiction can disrupt family life and cause harmful effects that last for generations. Remember that addiction is a disease that upsets many areas of the home, including:

- Finances
- Family unity
- Mental and physical health






REPERCUSSIONS OF GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ALCOHOLISM

- Adult children of alcoholics often have feelings of worthlessness and failure. Some studies have shown that they have difficulty in establishing healthy relationships with others.
- Children of alcoholics may exhibit problems of depression, aggression, or impulsive behavior.
- It's hard for them to recognize that their problems may stem from having grown up in a family with an alcoholic parent.

RECOVERY IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table. The man is behind the woman, with his arms around her, suggesting support. Both have serious, thoughtful expressions. The woman is looking off to the side, and the man is looking down. They appear to be in a quiet, reflective moment.

When a loved one is battling an addiction, they often need understanding and compassion from family and friends. Here are ways to take action when a family member needs help:

- Bond with others by joining an educational or support group.
- Seek fulfillment beyond alcohol, such as volunteering as a family or joining an activity together.
- Prepare a contingency plan for unexpected relapse, just to be safe.



STAY POSITIVE

When a loved one is an alcoholic, emotions can be conflicting. Many don't want to cause disruptions or arguments, but making excuses for addiction won't help anyone in the family in the long run. Use firm boundaries, and above all, compassion to get your loved one the help they need.

- Understand the causes and effects of addiction on the individual and family.
- Be open and establish transparent communication.
- Stop old behaviors in their tracks, such as denial and blame.

ABOUT YELLOWSTONE RECOVERY

Yellowstone Recovery offers tranquil alcohol rehab homes in Orange County, each no further than two miles from the beach. To meet all recovery needs, Yellowstone Recovery offer group and individual counseling, 12-step meetings, and a support group for families.

For more info, visit www.yellowstonerecovery.com or call 888-897-1455.



Sources

1. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19062348>
2. <http://www.nacoa.net/impfacts.htm>
3. <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/jul2006/niaaa-03.htm>