

## Complete resources for substance use and misuse.

### If you're struggling, we can help.

Using illegal drugs, misusing medications, or consuming excessive amounts of alcohol can impact your recovery and resilience. These are all behaviors that can complicate healing and prolong recovery from physical or psychological wounds, injuries, or illnesses. Substance use and misuse can also harm the lives of your friends and family. The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Health Promotion and Wellness Department is committed to providing you with the tools you need to fight these harmful behaviors. We have the educational materials and resources to help you understand, avoid, or overcome the negative effects of excessive alcohol use and substance use.

Visit <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/Wii-substance-abuse.aspx> to learn more about substance use and misuse, including:

- ▶ Prescription Drug Use
- ▶ Safe Use of Medications
- ▶ Drinking Responsibly
- ▶ 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative

To learn how our resources and tools can facilitate recovery and strengthen resilience, visit us at [HTTP://WWW.MED.NAVY.MIL/SITES/NMCPHC/WOUNDED-ILL-AND-INJURED/PAGES/HEALTH-PROMOTION.ASPX](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/wounded-ill-and-injured/pages/health-promotion.aspx).

For more information on your local resources, contact:



## HARMFUL. HELPFUL.



**Substance Use and Misuse for  
Wounded, Ill, and Injured Sailors  
and Marines**



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PREVENTION AND PROTECTION START HERE



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## Dealing with a situation without easy answers.

In many cases, your health care provider may dispense to you over-the-counter or prescription medications that, when taken correctly, can help you manage symptoms of your wound, illness, or injury. However, misuse or abuse of these medications may have the opposite effect, and can derail your recovery and cause negative health consequences. Substance use and misuse may impact your ability to communicate, choose healthy behaviors, and make logical decisions. Unhealthy behaviors, such as medication misuse, excessive alcohol use, and illegal drug use, could also lead to addiction, which not only impacts you, but can negatively affect your co-workers, friends, family, and loved ones. Fortunately, NMCPHC and your local health care provider or substance abuse counselor can help you avoid or overcome falling into unhealthy patterns of drug misuse or abuse.

## What is substance use and misuse?

Substance use includes using illegal drugs, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, and misusing pharmaceuticals (both prescription and over-the-counter drugs).

Prescription misuse includes taking medications that were prescribed to someone else, taking medications outside of the prescribed timeframe, and taking medications in ways other than what was prescribed, such as consuming higher doses than recommended or for experiencing the feelings they cause. Some facts:

- Prescription drug misuse and abuse is our nation's fastest growing drug problem. In a typical month, approximately 4.5 million Americans use a prescription pain reliever for nonmedical reasons.<sup>1</sup> Emergency department visits involving the misuse or abuse of pharmaceutical drugs increased 114% between 2004 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 7.5 million children live with at least one parent who abuses alcohol or other drugs.<sup>3</sup> Children of parents with substance use disorders are more likely to experience abuse or neglect, as well as physical, academic, social, and emotional problems.<sup>4</sup>

Excessive alcohol use includes heavy drinking, binge drinking (five or more drinks in one sitting for men or four or more drinks in one sitting for women), underage drinking, and drinking while pregnant.<sup>5</sup> One should also avoid risky drinking (both the daily and weekly limits) which can result in negative health effects; risky drinking is more than four drinks on any day or 14 drinks per week for men, and more than three drinks on any day or seven drinks per week for women.<sup>6</sup> Alcohol and drug use can hinder judgment and lead to harmful risk-taking behavior.

## Impact on recovery and overall health.

Under the supervision of a medical professional, medications can help you recover from a wound, illness, or injury. However, self-medicating by taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs incorrectly, using illegal drugs, and drinking excessively can result in longer and more difficult rehabilitation from your wound, illness,

## Substance Use and Misuse for Wounded, Ill, and Injured Sailors and Marines Overview

or injury and lead to additional devastating physical and psychological consequences. Consequences of substance use and misuse can include:

- Impaired wound healing.<sup>7</sup>
- Slowed or delayed recovery of brain injury.<sup>8</sup>
- Dangerous interactions between prescribed medications and other substances, including alcohol.<sup>8</sup>
- Increased risk of new injury.<sup>8</sup>
- Increased risk of emotional issues, such as depression.<sup>8</sup>
- Increased bruising and risk of infection.<sup>9</sup>

## Risk factors.

There are factors that may put you at an increased risk for misusing or using drugs. For example, service members with traumatic brain injury (TBI) have an increased risk of binge drinking and alcohol or drug related incidents.<sup>8</sup> To avoid putting others at risk, properly dispose of unused prescription medications after your prescription expires, never share with others, and never take medications that are prescribed to someone else.

## Take action if you notice a problem.

If you or someone you know is at risk:

- Talk to your Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA) or Navy Drug and Alcohol Counselor.
- Speak to your commanding officer, XO, OIC, CMDCM/COB, or chaplain.
- Reach out to DoD medical personnel.
- Contact your Fleet and Family Support Center Counselor.

While the Navy and Marine Corps have a zero tolerance policy regarding substance use and misuse, with a potential consequence of administrative separation from the Navy or Marine Corps, nothing is more important than your health. If you or someone you know is at risk, please reach out to one of the contacts above. If you are looking for more information on the harmful effects of alcohol, visit the Military OneSource website at [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil).

<sup>1</sup> Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHresultsPDFHTML2013/2k13/NSDUHresults2013.pdf>. Published September 2014. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The DAWN Report: Highlights of the 2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network Findings on Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k13/DAWN127/sr127-DAWN-highlights.htm>. Published February 2013. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Data Spotlight: More than 7.5 Million Children Live with a Parent with Alcohol Problems. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/Spot061ChildrenOfAlcoholics2012/Spot061ChildrenOfAlcoholics2012.pdf>. Published February 2012. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>4</sup> The NSDUH Report: Children Living with Substance-Dependent or Substance-Abusing Parents: 2002 to 2007. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k9/SAParents/SAParents.htm>. Published April 2009. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>5</sup> What is Excessive Alcohol Use? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/pdfs/excessive\\_alcohol\\_use.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/pdfs/excessive_alcohol_use.pdf). Updated March 2014. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Moyer, V. Screening and Behavioral Counseling Interventions in Primary Care to Reduce Alcohol Misuse: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *Ann Intern Med*. 2013;159(3):210-218. <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Home/GetFile/1/319/alcmisfinalrs/pdf>. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Factors Affecting Wound Healing. *J Dent Res*. 2010;89(3):219-229. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2903966/>. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Alcohol Use After Traumatic Brain Injury. Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center. <http://www.msctc.org/tbi/factsheets/Alcohol-Use-After-Traumatic-Brain-Injury>. Accessed July 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Alcohol's Effects on the Body. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/alcohol-effects-body>. Accessed July 2015.

