

## A complete resource 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. It can also harm the lives of your friends and family. The Health Promotion and Wellness Department of the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center 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, illegal drug use, and misuse of over-the-counter or prescription medications to support recovery and the return to optimal health.

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 programs 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**



**NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER**  
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. It 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 (either prescription and over-the-counter drugs).

Prescription abuse and 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 4.9 million Americans use a prescription pain reliever for nonmedical reasons.<sup>1</sup> Emergency room visits involving the misuse or abuse of pharmaceutical drugs increased 114% between 2004 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ More than eight 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.

Excessive alcohol use includes heavy drinking (on average, more than two drinks per day for men, more than one drink per day for women), binge drinking (five or more drinks in one sitting for men, four or more drinks in one sitting for women), underage drinking, and drinking while pregnant. Alcohol and drug use can hinder judgment and lead to harmful risk-taking behavior.

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

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

- ▶ Impaired wound healing
- ▶ Slowed or delayed recovery of brain injury
- ▶ Dangerous interactions between prescribed medications and other substances, including alcohol
- ▶ Increased risk of new injury
- ▶ Increased risk of emotional issues, such as depression
- ▶ Increased bruising and risk of infection

## Risk factors.

There are factors that may put you at an increased risk for misusing or abusing drugs. For example, service members with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) have an increased risk of binge drinking and alcohol or drug related incidents. 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 has a zero tolerance policy regarding substance use and misuse, with a potential consequence of administrative separation from the Navy, nothing is more important than your health. If you or someone you know is at risk, please reach to one of the contacts above.

1 SAMHSA, Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-46, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4795. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2013.

2 SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. The DAWN Report: Highlights of the 2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) Findings on Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k13/DAWN127/sr127-DAWN-highlights.htm>. Published February 2013. Accessed May 2014.

3 SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies. (April 16, 2009). The NSDUH Report: Children Living with Substance-Dependent or Substance-Abusing Parents: 2002 to 2007. <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k9/SAParents/SAParents.htm>. Published April 2009. Accessed May 2014.

