

BELIEVING FALSEHOODS MAKES RECOVERY DIFFICULT – dr Elca Erlank.

There are many misconceptions about alcoholism that can lead to misunderstandings. The truth about alcoholism tends to differ greatly from the public perception of it. This can act as a handicap when it comes to helping people escape the misery of addiction. The following questions are asked regular by patients, families and communities.

Q: If I am just drinking beer on a daily basis, will I develop an alcohol problem?

A: The view of only using beer can give people a false sense of security. The reality is that beer contains alcohol and some of the stronger beers can contain high levels of alcohol. There are plenty of alcoholics who only have drunk beer.

Q: Do you think a person who gets drunk regularly is an alcoholic?

A: There are plenty of people who go through a period of heavy drinking in their life but don't become alcoholics. This most frequently happens with university/ college students who can [binge drink](#) at the weekends. Their behaviour is dangerous, but it does not necessarily mean that these people have developed an addiction.

Q: Is it true that people who are alcoholics are coming from a lower status rank in the community?

A: The average alcoholic does not end up in the gutter. In fact a significant number of them will be doing relatively well in life. These [high functioning addicts](#) can have good jobs and a family that adores them.

Q: I am not drinking every day or in the mornings, but when I do drink, I drink excessively. Do I have an alcohol problem?

A: The drinking patterns of alcoholics are individual and unique. Drinking patterns differ from one another. By doing this they can fool themselves, and loved ones, that they are not really alcoholics. The fact that the individual does not have control over his drinking, when they are drinking, is an obvious sign that something is not right.

Q: If my husband goes for treatment will all our problems in connection with alcohol, be over?

A: Unrealistic expectations of recovery are dangerous because it can lead to disappointment and relapse. Recovery is a process and not an event. This means that giving up alcohol is just the first step in a long process to a great life away from addiction. The goal of recovery will be for the individual to develop coping skills so that they no longer have the need to try to escape from life.

Q: Will cold showers, fresh air or hot coffee help a person to get sober after a binge?

A: Only time will remove alcohol from the system. It takes the body approximately one hour to eliminate the alcohol in one drink. An old saying goes, "Give a drunk a cup of coffee and all you have is a wide-awake drunk".

Challenge: Take the CAGE test and confirm if you have an alcohol problem.

The CAGE Test

One of the oldest and most popular screening tools for alcohol abuse is the CAGE test, which is a short, four question test that diagnoses alcohol problems over a lifetime.

C - Have you ever felt you should **cut down** on your drinking?

A- Have people **annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking?

G - Have you ever felt bad or **guilty** about your drinking?

E - Eye opener: Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Because denial usually accompanies alcohol abuse problems, the CAGE test, like most alcohol screening tests, asks questions about problems associated with drinking rather than the amount of alcohol consumed. Two “yes” answers to the CAGE test indicate a possible alcohol problem.

ENQUIRY:

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