

September 2010

September is National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

It is important to understand there is a significant difference between habit and addiction: **Habit** is doing something that is familiar and comforting, such as cracking your knuckles, eating while watching TV, etc. Some people who have “kicked” the smoking habit, start smoking again if they are drinking because it is familiar and comforting. **An addiction** is any condition resulting in physical cravings. If unable to satisfy the need, the person may experience any or all of the symptoms of withdrawal; chills, shakes, nausea and cramps. Some people have less impulse control than others. **It can take as little as FIVE DAYS for some to become habituated on a substance** - less if the user is in relapse.

Medical Treatment for Addiction

Physicians can't “fix” an addiction like they mend a broken leg or cure an infection. Medical approaches to addiction are helpful but not 100 percent effective. Some medications require prolonged treatment. If the user stops taking them, the user can relapse within a few months. There is no such thing as a good or a bad medication - how effective a medication is depends how it is used.



Narcotics

Narcotic pain medication is excellent for short term use but loses its effectiveness with long-term use, which is why users need more. When a person stops taking narcotics, the body is not capable of producing normal levels of endorphins for a prolonged period of time. Endorphins are substances naturally produced in the body which moderate pain perception. Chronic narcotic usage tells the body there is no need to

produce endorphins so it stops making them - and recovery from injuries is prolonged and requires additional medication. That's why the experts tell users to exercise. Exercise releases endorphins and can help control some forms of chronic pain.

Recovery: The Good News and the Bad News

During recovery your brain's ability to react to stress is weakened and depressed. Long-term substance abuse can cause psychiatric disorders, which can persist long after detoxification. The good news is that these symptoms *will eventually fade*. Substance abuse recovery is stressful so it is important to avoid triggers that can make recovery longer. **Long-term cocaine use, however**, burns up a person's feelings of love, romance and compassion, which may not come back after the user stops.



Medical Walk-in Open!
1800 Cooks Hill Road, Suite F
736-3042

Hours: Noon - 10:00 p.m.
7 days a week - closed holidays

Other Valley View Health Center Locations:

2690 NE Kresky, Chehalis
(360) 330-9595
Medical, Dental and Mental Health

Morton Dental
(360) 496-5101

Onalaska (360) 978-6600
Medical

Raymond (Pacific County)
(360) 942-3040
Medical and Dental

Toledo (360) 864-4400
Medical

Winlock (360) 785-9400
Medical

www.vvhc.org

Continued on back →

Alcohol Abuse Facts:

- Alcohol abuse almost always causes vitamin deficiencies
- Even with prolonged absence from alcohol, your body may not be able to absorb and metabolize vitamins. Lack of vitamins can lead to mental health deficiencies.
- Some physical symptoms, such as frequent nausea, cramping, passing blood or yellowing of the skin may not disappear after prolonged abstinence.
- If you are or have been a heavy user and any physical symptoms persist for more than a few days, you may be experiencing a life-threatening medical condition. Please see a doctor.
- With aggressive treatment and persistent follow-through by the patient, former abusers can have fairly typical lives.

3 of every 10 people will be involved in an alcohol-related traffic accident in their lifetimes.

40 percent of ALL TRAFFIC FATALITIES are alcohol-related.

Source: *National Traffic and Alcohol Safety Association*

Solutions

You cannot buy motivation. Drugs can't make a person want to quit an unhealthy habit. The most effective treatment is internal motivation – the user has to want to quit - and will need several months, perhaps years, of intense support. If you have a drug or alcohol problem, in Lewis County call the Eugenia Center at 740- 9767 or New Directions Counseling at 740-4380. In Pacific County, please call the Health and Human Services Department at 360-875-9343.

In every community there are dozens of resources to help with alcohol and drug abuse. See your local telephone book or newspaper under “support.”

Our main location in Chehalis offers Medical, Dental and Behavioral Health services



2690 NE Kresky Avenue, Chehalis, (360) 330-9595

We welcome Medicare, Medicaid, the uninsured, underinsured and low-income individuals and families. Most insurances are accepted and a sliding fee scale program also available.

Other Valley View centers in Morton (Dental only), Onalaska, Raymond, Toledo, Winlock and new Walk-In (medical only) now open at 1800 Cooks Hill Road, Suite F, Centralia

Bilingual Services available at all clinics

For location addresses and phone numbers and general health information, please visit www.vvhc.org