



# American Drug Testing

*Drug-Free Workplace Programs*

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## DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

AN ONGOING SERIES TO PROTECT YOUR COMPANY BY HELPING TO KEEP DRUGS OUT OF YOUR WORKPLACE.

### Addiction and Dependence, Part I

*(First of a four-part series)*

Addiction is a chronic, progressive, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive use of one or more substances that results in physical, psychological, or social harm to the individual and continued use of the substance or substances despite this harm. Addiction has two possible components, physical dependence and psychological dependence:

**Physical dependence** – A state of becoming physically adapted to alcohol or other drugs. There are two important aspects to physical dependence:

- Tolerance – The need for higher and higher doses to achieve the same effects.

- Withdrawal – The appearance of physical

*“two possible components, physical dependence and psychological dependence”*

symptoms (e.g., nausea, chills, and vomiting) when someone stops taking a drug too quickly. **Psychological dependence** – A subjective sense of need for alcohol or other drug, either for its positive effects or to avoid negative effects associated with no use.

**Is everyone who tries alcohol or drugs destined for addiction?**

No. Not everyone who uses alcohol or experiments with illegal drugs ends up addicted. In fact, alcohol can be enjoyed by many people without serious negative consequences. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell early on whose use may

lead to addiction. The following are several different ways that people use alcohol and drugs:

**Experimental Use** – Out of curiosity or through peer pressure, individuals may try drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs. If the use of the alcohol or drug continues irresponsibly, experimentation may become problematic.

**Social/Recreational Use** –

**Abuse** – Abuse is a condition in which the use of alcohol or other drugs has

become such a central part of an individual's life that he or she is willing to let go of important activities in order to use the drug. Drug abuse involves the intake of a drug under circumstances that significantly increase the hazard potential. Examples of abuse include: use of alcohol or drugs in spite of a drug-free workplace policy, taking prescription drugs without a prescription or taking drugs in a way that are not prescribed, or use of over-the-counter drugs to the point of impairment.

In part II we examine the nature of addiction

Source: US Department of Labor



Drinking alcoholic beverages is permitted in American society, and some excessive use may even be condoned. If use does not cause problems for the user, or cause problems for others, most people consider such use to be social or recreational.

#### The Drug-Free Workplace Advisor



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