



# City Health Information

Volume 35 (2016)

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

No 3; 21-28

## ADDRESSING ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE— AN INTEGRAL PART OF PRIMARY CARE

- Unhealthy alcohol and drug use are treatable, but often go unrecognized and unaddressed in primary care.
- Incorporate a continuum of substance use health services into your practice.
- Use electronic health records and the clinical care team to facilitate service delivery.

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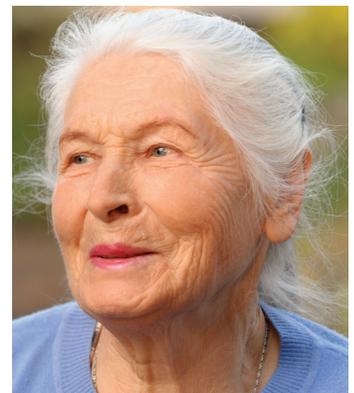
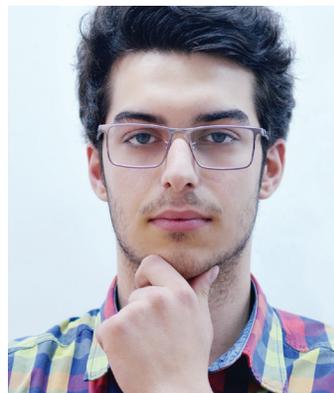
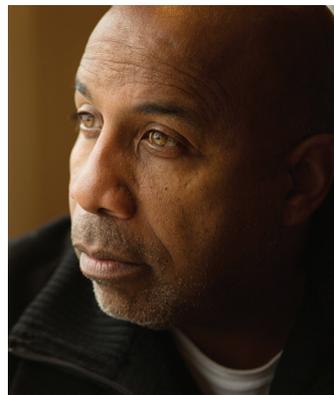
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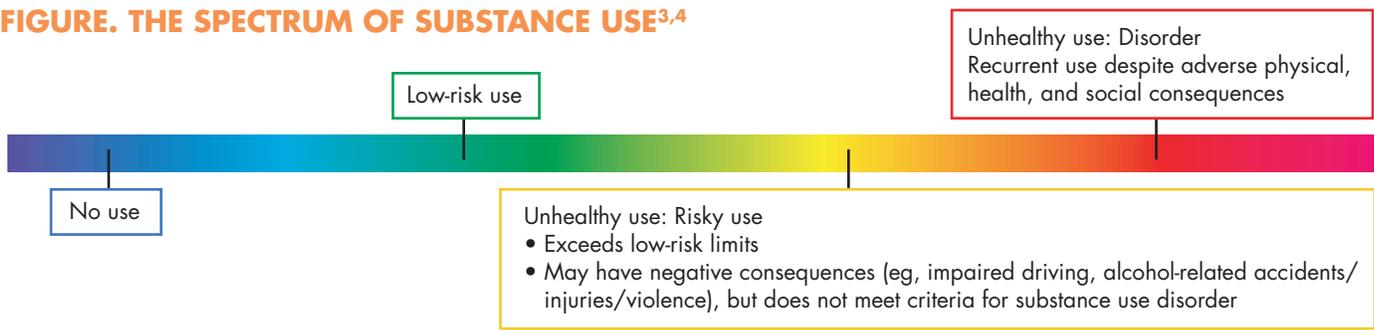
#### RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS

#### REFERENCES

Unhealthy substance use is a leading cause of preventable death in New York City. In 2014, nearly 1,800 New Yorkers died of alcohol-related causes.<sup>1</sup> Unintentional drug overdose deaths increased by 43% from 2010 to 2014 (8.2 vs 11.7 per 100,000 residents, respectively); in 2014, 79% of the 800 deaths that occurred involved an opioid.<sup>2</sup>



**FIGURE. THE SPECTRUM OF SUBSTANCE USE<sup>3,4</sup>**



While unhealthy substance use is common, it often goes unrecognized and unaddressed by health care providers. In 2013, an estimated 22 million people aged 12 and older in the United States had a substance use disorder in the past year, but only 2.5 million reported receiving treatment.<sup>5</sup> In 2011, only 1 in 6 adults in the United States reported ever discussing alcohol consumption with a health professional.<sup>6</sup> Primary care providers are ideally situated to identify and manage unhealthy substance use. Integrating substance use screening and management into primary care improves access to treatment, reduces stigma, improves patient outcomes (including treatment retention),<sup>7,8</sup> supports relapse prevention,<sup>9</sup> and allows you to address coexisting health risks and illness.<sup>10</sup> Prevent substance-related illness, injury, and death among your patients by providing

1. screening for unhealthy substance use,
2. intervention based on screening results, using brief intervention and referral to specialty care when appropriate,
3. pharmacotherapy,

4. relapse prevention support, and
5. harm reduction services.

**ROUTINELY SCREEN FOR UNHEALTHY SUBSTANCE USE**

Substance use screening is a 2-step process (**Box 1<sup>11-14</sup>**). Step A identifies unhealthy use (**Figure<sup>3,4</sup>**) and Step B assesses severity of use. In a nonjudgmental tone, explain that you routinely ask all your patients about these issues and then ask the initial screening questions (Step A). For those who screen positive, assess severity of misuse with a validated tool (Step B).

**USE THE SCREENING RESULT TO DETERMINE ACTION STEPS**

**Alcohol**

If you used the AUDIT for Step B, the score will guide the action steps needed (**Box 2<sup>12,15-17</sup>**).

**Drugs**

If you used the DAST-10 for Step B, the score will guide the action steps needed (**Box 3<sup>14,18-20</sup>**).

**BOX 1. SCREENING FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE IN ADULTS<sup>a,11-14</sup>**

Step A		Step B <sup>b</sup>
<b>Alcohol</b> Single-question screen: <i>How many times in the past year have you had X or more drinks in a day?</i> (X = 5 for men and 4 for women and for men >65) OR	If ≥1	➔ AUDIT
<b>AUDIT-C</b>	If ≥4 for men, or ≥3 for women and patients aged >65	➔ AUDIT
<b>Drugs</b> <i>How many times in the past year have you used an illegal drug or used a prescription medication for nonmedical reasons?</i>	If ≥1	➔ DAST-10

<sup>a</sup> For adolescents, use the CRAFFT. Consult the 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics statement, [Substance Use Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment for Pediatricians](#), for detailed guidance (**Resources for Providers: Screening Tools**).

<sup>b</sup> See **Resources for Providers: Screening Tools** for more options.

**BOX 2. ACTION STEPS FOR ALCOHOL USE BASED ON AUDIT SCORE<sup>12,15-17</sup>**

AUDIT score	Action Steps
0-7 (low risk):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce healthy behavior.</li> <li>• Give educational messages about low-risk alcohol use (no more than an average of 1 drink per day for women and for men aged &gt;65 and 2 drinks per day for men).</li> </ul>
8-19 (risky use):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a brief intervention to give personalized advice about alcohol use (see page 23).</li> </ul>
≥20 (very high risk, probable disorder):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access to treatment, either in primary care or by referral.</li> </ul>

**Note:** Pregnant women, people who take certain medications (eg, benzodiazepines), and people who have certain health conditions (eg, chronic hepatitis B or C infection) have different recommended thresholds for at-risk alcohol use (eg, no alcohol use); modify action steps accordingly, recognizing that although no use is recommended, cutting back is likely beneficial.

## Brief intervention for unhealthy substance use

Brief intervention (**Boxes 4<sup>21-23</sup>** and **5<sup>24</sup>**) is a 5- to 10-minute conversation that helps patients understand the risks of continued substance use and strengthens their motivation to change.<sup>25</sup>

## Address health needs of patients who use alcohol or drugs

Recognize and address the impact of drug use on the patient's overall health (**Box 6**).

## OFFER PHARMACOTHERAPY\*

### Alcohol

Medications for alcohol use disorder are effective but considerably underused. Both acamprosate and naltrexone are associated with improved drinking outcomes in patients with alcohol use disorder.<sup>26</sup>

- **Naltrexone** given once daily reduces risk of return to any drinking and return to heavy drinking.<sup>26</sup>
- **Acamprosate** given 3 times a day reduces risk of return to any drinking.<sup>26</sup>

\*See product prescribing information for details.

### Opioids

Pharmacotherapy with opioid agonists (buprenorphine or methadone) is the most effective form of treatment for opioid use disorder; opioid agonist treatment reduces opioid misuse, decreases cravings, improves social functioning, and decreases mortality.<sup>27-30</sup>

- Buprenorphine is an office-based treatment that can be integrated into primary care along with management of patients' other health issues. Buprenorphine is an important clinical tool that should be available in primary care settings and offered to patients with opioid use disorder. To learn more about buprenorphine, including how to obtain training and a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine, see City Health Information: [Buprenorphine—An Office-Based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder](#) or visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website (**Resources for Providers: Buprenorphine**).
- Methadone is only available in specialized treatment settings; it may be a good option for patients who could benefit from more structured and co-located services.
- Long-acting naltrexone is another option for office-based treatment of opioid use disorder. Limited data show that long-acting naltrexone formulations may improve treatment retention without relapse to opioid use compared with placebo.<sup>31,32</sup>

## PROVIDE RELAPSE PREVENTION SUPPORT

Be sure your patients understand that substance use disorders are chronic conditions that can follow a relapsing course<sup>33</sup> (**Box 7<sup>34,35</sup>**).

## BOX 3. ACTION STEPS FOR DRUG USE BASED ON DAST-10 SCORE<sup>14,18-20</sup>

Score	Action Steps
0 (no problem):	Reinforce healthy behavior.
1-2 (low-level problem):	Provide simple education; monitor the patient and reassess in the future. Consider a brief intervention. <sup>a</sup>
3-5 (moderate-level problem):	Offer a brief intervention (see <b>Boxes 4</b> and <b>5</b> ).
6-10 (substantial- to severe-level problem):	Assess further to diagnose a substance use disorder and to provide access to treatment.

<sup>a</sup> Evidence supporting brief interventions for drug use is lacking; however, several studies are under way.

## BOX 4. BRIEF INTERVENTION FOR UNHEALTHY SUBSTANCE USE<sup>21-23</sup>

*When providing brief intervention,*

- Use a concerned, nonconfrontational approach.
- Provide clear, personalized advice about cutting down or abstaining.
- If possible, link alcohol use to a specific medical problem, such as hypertension or liver disease.
- Listen reflectively—summarize and repeat what your patient says.
- Involve the patient in setting mutually acceptable goals.
- Help the patient identify drinking triggers and discuss practical ways to cope.

See [Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much](#) and City Health Information—[Brief Intervention for Excessive Drinking \(Resources for Providers: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment\)](#) for guidance.

## BOX 5. WHAT TO SAY IN A BRIEF INTERVENTION—SAMPLE STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS<sup>24</sup>

*“Help me understand, through your eyes, some of the things you like about using X; how about some of the things you don't like about using X?”*

*“I have some information on reducing the risk of drinking and drug use; would you mind if I shared them with you?”*

*“What are some of the steps/options that will work for you to make a change?”*

*“What supports do you have for making this change?”*

*“Great ideas! Is it okay for me to write down your plan to keep with you as a reminder?”*

There are several frameworks for helping patients avoid relapse, including the *PRIMECare* Model (for alcohol use disorders)<sup>36</sup> (**Resources for Providers: Relapse Prevention**) and “recovery management checkups” (quarterly screening, early re-intervention, and referral to treatment, provided by a nonphysician).<sup>37</sup> Mindfulness approaches that enable the patient to be aware of physical or emotional discomfort without automatically reacting are emerging and promising.<sup>38</sup>

### Link patients to peer-based support

Social support, including support specific to substance use, can be an important aspect of recovery.<sup>39,40</sup> Alcoholics Anonymous, a mutual support group, is a widely used option that can be associated with reduced alcohol consumption.<sup>41</sup>

## BOX 6. PREVENTIVE CARE CONSIDERATIONS FOR PATIENTS WHO USE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

Screening	Comments
Sexual history <sup>a</sup>	All patients, especially <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Use injection drugs (and their partners)</li> <li>◦ Have multiple partners</li> <li>◦ Had a prior sexually transmitted infection</li> </ul> </li> <li>• MSM</li> <li>• Transgender people</li> <li>• Sex workers</li> </ul>
Pregnancy intention counseling (including plans to father a child)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer <a href="#">contraception counseling</a></li> <li>• Explain risks of substance use for fetus/infant/pregnant women</li> </ul>
Intimate partner violence	See NYC Health Department <a href="#">Intimate Partner Violence</a> page
Reproductive and sexual coercion, other sexual trauma	See <a href="#">Addressing Intimate Partner Violence, Reproductive and Sexual Coercion and Seeking Safety</a>
HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually</li> <li>• Every 3-6 months if high risk</li> </ul> See <a href="#">HIV Testing Laws</a> and <a href="#">CDC Recommendations</a> . Consider Pre- and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP)
Hepatitis B	Once
Hepatitis C	Annually for all patients who use drugs (see <a href="#">HCV Testing and Linkage to Care</a> )
Tuberculosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually</li> <li>• PPD or QuantiFERON</li> </ul>
<b>Vaccination<sup>b,c</sup></b>	
Hepatitis A and B	All patients who use drugs
Pneumococcal (PPSV23)	Patients aged >18 years with alcohol use disorders

<sup>a</sup> See [www.nycptc.org/x/STD\\_Screening\\_chart\\_2015.pdf](http://www.nycptc.org/x/STD_Screening_chart_2015.pdf) for screening guidelines and [www.nycptc.org/x/STD\\_TreatmentTable\\_2015.pdf](http://www.nycptc.org/x/STD_TreatmentTable_2015.pdf) for treatment guidelines.

<sup>b</sup> See [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/adult.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/adult.html) for adult immunization recommendations.

<sup>c</sup> Vaccination recommendations given here that may be different from routine recommendations.

MSM, men who have sex with men; PPD, purified protein derivative.

The use of peer support workers who are in recovery to offer support, encouragement, hope, and mentorship is a promising practice.<sup>42-44</sup>

## PROVIDE HARM REDUCTION SERVICES

### Prescribe naloxone

Naloxone safely reverses opioid overdose and can be given to an overdosing person by trained friends and family members. Naloxone presents no potential for abuse and has not been shown to increase risky drug use.<sup>45</sup>

- **Assess risk factors** for opioid overdose (**Box 8**).
- Talk to your patients about risk factors for opioid overdose. Explain that solitary use is also a risk factor.
- Offer a naloxone prescription to your patients at risk for opioid overdose.<sup>46</sup> Any trained clinical staff can teach patients about naloxone use.
- Explain that harm reduction programs and many pharmacies also offer naloxone. See **Resources for Providers: Opioid Overdose Prevention** for additional information.

## BOX 7. SUPPORTING RELAPSE PREVENTION<sup>34,35</sup>

- Explain that relapses are just temporary setbacks and not a sign that treatment isn't working.
- Help the patient identify triggers for relapse.
- Teach coping skills.
- Approach relapses nonjudgmentally. Patients who relapse are likely to feel negative feelings like guilt, shame, and anxiety. Being nonjudgmental will help them learn from a relapse and cope more effectively in the future.
- Involve the family whenever possible, with the patient's permission. Refer family members to peer support groups to learn about their roles in the patient's recovery.

## BOX 8. INDICATIONS FOR NALOXONE PRESCRIBING

- High-dose opioid prescription ( $\geq 100$  total morphine milligram equivalents/day)
- Chronic opioid therapy ( $\geq 3$  months)
- Opioid misuse/illicit use, including<sup>a</sup>:
  - Current or past history
  - Current treatment for opioid use disorder (eg, methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone, treatment without pharmacotherapy)
  - Opioid overdose history
- Family member or friend of an individual who is at risk for opioid overdose.

<sup>a</sup> Refers to all opioid drug types (eg, opioid analgesic prescription, heroin) and all routes of administration (eg, injection drug use, oral, intranasal).

Note: Patients who meet any of the first 3 criteria may be at higher risk if they either experience decreased tolerance after a period of abstinence (eg, incarceration, hospitalization, detoxification) or use other central nervous system depressants (eg, benzodiazepines, alcohol) concurrently with opioids. See [Naloxone for Overdose Prevention: Prescribing Guidance for Clinical Settings](#) for more information.

## Prescribe sterile syringes

The New York State Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP) allows licensed pharmacies, health care facilities, and providers to sell or provide up to 10 syringes at one time to any person aged 18 or older.

Become an ESAP provider and prescribe sterile syringes to your patients who inject drugs (registration is required). Alternatively, refer your patients to ESAP pharmacies where syringes are dispensed without a prescription or to a harm reduction program that provides this service.<sup>47</sup> See **Resources for Providers: Syringe Services** for information on how to register with ESAP and lists of ESAP pharmacies and harm reduction programs.

## SUMMARY

Unhealthy substance use is common and treatable in the primary care setting. Routinely screen for substance use and provide brief intervention, pharmacotherapy, relapse prevention support, harm reduction services, and referrals, as needed. ♦

## INTEGRATING SUBSTANCE USE CARE INTO PRACTICE WORKFLOW<sup>48-50</sup>

- Include screening in the electronic health record—it may improve efficiency and fulfill provisions of the Affordable Care Act.
- Consider distributing the work broadly across the care team, including nurses and medical assistants.
- With patient's permission, communicate and coordinate with behavioral health providers through coordinated care, co-located care, or fully integrated care where primary care and behavioral health providers share location, treatment plan, and organizational support.

## HOW TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE USE IN PRIMARY CARE

- Routinely screen adults for substance use.
- Use screening results to determine action steps.
- Educate patients about risks of unhealthy substance use.
- Offer pharmacotherapy.
- Offer relapse prevention support.
- Provide harm reduction services.

## RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS

### Alcohol and Drug Use

- New York City Health Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Alcohol & Drug Use: [www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/alcohol-and-drug-use.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/alcohol-and-drug-use.page)  
*Information on drugs and health, alcohol and health, overdose prevention, and substance use treatment services*

### Screening Tools

- AUDIT: [libdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO\\_MSD\\_MSB\\_01\\_6a.pdf](http://libdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO_MSD_MSB_01_6a.pdf)
- ASSIST: [www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/activities/assist/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/activities/assist/en/index.html)
- NIDA Quick Screen and NIDA-Modified ASSIST: [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/resource-guide-screening-drug-use-in-general-medical-settings/nida-quick-screen](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/resource-guide-screening-drug-use-in-general-medical-settings/nida-quick-screen)
- CRAFFT (for adolescents): [ceasar-boston.org/clinicians/crafft.php](http://ceasar-boston.org/clinicians/crafft.php)
  - o American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Abuse. *Substance Use Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment for Pediatricians*: [pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/5/e1330.full](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/5/e1330.full)
- DAST-10: [www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/files/DAST-10.pdf](http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/files/DAST-10.pdf)

### Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment

- NYC Health Department
  - o Alcohol & Drug Use: Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment: [www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/screening-brief-intervention-and-referral-to-treatment.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/screening-brief-intervention-and-referral-to-treatment.page)
  - o City Health Information: [Brief Intervention for Excessive Drinking](#)

- American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Abuse. *Substance Use Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment for Pediatricians*: [pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/5/e1330.full](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/5/e1330.full)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. *Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much: A Clinician's Guide*. Updated 2005 Edition: [pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Practitioner/CliniciansGuide2005/clinicians\\_guide.htm](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/Practitioner/CliniciansGuide2005/clinicians_guide.htm)
- New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment: [www.oasas.ny.gov/admed/sbirt/index.cfm](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/admed/sbirt/index.cfm)
- Institute for Research, Education & Training in Addictions. SBIRT toolkit: [ireta.org/improve-practice/toolkitforsbirt/](http://ireta.org/improve-practice/toolkitforsbirt/)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT): [www.samhsa.gov/sbirt](http://www.samhsa.gov/sbirt)

### Buprenorphine

- NYC Health Department
  - o Buprenorphine Training and Technical Support Initiative: *For more information, e-mail: [buprenorphine@health.nyc.gov](mailto:buprenorphine@health.nyc.gov)*
  - o City Health Information: [Buprenorphine—An Office-Based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder](#)
- Providers' Clinical Support System (PCSS) for Opioid Therapies: [pcss-o.org](http://pcss-o.org)  
*Includes mentoring program*
- SAMHSA. General information on buprenorphine, waiver process, training: [www.samhsa.gov/](http://www.samhsa.gov/)

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**Relapse Prevention**

- The PRIMECare Model of Maintenance Care for Moderated Alcohol Use: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1924751/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1924751/) [See Appendix]

**Treatment Locators**

- SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator: [findtreatment.samhsa.gov/](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)
- OASAS Treatment Provider Search and Directory: [www.oasas.ny.gov/treatment/directory.cfm/](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/treatment/directory.cfm/)

**Opioid Overdose Prevention**

- NYC Health Department
  - Overdose Prevention Resources for Providers: [www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/overdose-prevention-resources-for-providers.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/overdose-prevention-resources-for-providers.page)  
*Includes guidance on prescribing naloxone in clinical settings and a training video*
  - Naloxone and Overdose Prevention in Pharmacies: [www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/naloxone-and-overdose-prevention-in-pharmacies.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/health-topics/naloxone-and-overdose-prevention-in-pharmacies.page)  
*Includes a list of participating NYC pharmacies and a patient handout*

- New York State's Opioid Overdose Prevention Program: [www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/opioid\\_overdose\\_prevention/](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/opioid_overdose_prevention/)

**Syringe Services**

- New York State Department of Health. Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP): Overview of the Law and Regulations: [www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles\\_syringes/esap/overview.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles_syringes/esap/overview.htm)
- ESAP Pharmacy Directory: [www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles\\_syringes/esap/docs/esap\\_pharmacies.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needles_syringes/esap/docs/esap_pharmacies.pdf)

**City Health Information (CHI) Archives:**

[www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/resources/chi-archives.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/resources/chi-archives.page)

- Buprenorphine—An Office-based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder
- Brief Intervention for Excessive Drinking

**RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS****Alcohol and Drug Use**

- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Alcohol & Drug Use: [www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/alcohol-and-drug-use.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/alcohol-and-drug-use.page)  
*Information on drugs and health, alcohol and health, overdose prevention, and substance use treatment services*

**Publications**

- NYC Health Department
  - Health Bulletins
    - *Cocaine: Do You Have a Problem?:* [www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews10-06.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews10-06.pdf)
    - *Marijuana: Is it holding you back?:* [www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews7-11.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews7-11.pdf)

- *Excessive Drinking Is Dangerous:* [www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews9-08.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews9-08.pdf)
- *Prescription Painkillers: The Dangers of Misuse:* [www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews11-01.pdf](http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/dohmhnews11-01.pdf)

**Treatment Locators**

- LIFENET website: [www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/crisis-emergency-services-lifenet.page](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/crisis-emergency-services-lifenet.page)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator: [findtreatment.samhsa.gov/](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)
- New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services. Treatment Provider Search and Directory: [www.oasas.ny.gov/treatment/directory.cfm](http://www.oasas.ny.gov/treatment/directory.cfm)

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Rhoda Schlamm, Medical Editor

**Consultants:**  
Aaron D. Fox, MD, MS, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center  
Chinazo O. Cunningham, MD, MS, Professor of Medicine, Associate Chief, Division of General Internal Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine/Montefiore Medical Center

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