

Factors in History Which May Indicate Alcohol Abuse or Alcohol Dependence

Certain aspects of the patient history in a patient who is using alcohol can provide evidence that the patient may be suffering from alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence. These are outlined below.

Presenting Complaints or Review of Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Pain • Dyspepsia, nausea, or vomiting occurring in morning or evening • GI bleeding or pancreatitis • Hypertension poorly responsive to treatment • Memory disorders experienced while drinking (blackouts) • Multiple head injuries resulting in loss of consciousness • Recurrent depression or anxiety disorder • Rib fractures or other trauma, especially motor vehicle-related • Unexplained hepatitis
Family History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-degree relative with alcoholism • First-degree relative with major psychiatric disorder (sometimes undiagnosed alcoholism)
Alcohol and Other Drug Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy chronic consumption of alcohol > 40 gms / day • Use of opiates or cocaine • Use of sedative-hypnotic agents (licitly or illicitly obtained) • Previous history of AWS requiring hospitalization
Evidence of Familial Discord or Social Dysfunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrests for violent or disorderly conduct • Divorce, separation or family discord • Driving while intoxicated arrests (DWI) • Incarceration • Involvement in domestic violence • Unemployment or frequent job changes