

## 4 Signs That Your Drinking Is Getting Out of Control

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April is Alcohol Awareness Month, so if you drink (or know someone who does), take a second to consider the surprising signs of alcohol dependency.



Dr. Carlos Tirado, chief medical officer at [Enterhealth](#), a Texas-based addiction disease management provider, offers these warning signs to help determine when social drinking has developed into a drinking problem:

**1. Drinking to relieve stress or anxiety.** "Stress and anxiety are very common among us all, and many people use various outlets in order to relieve stress," says Tirado. "One stress-reliever that is dangerous to use is alcohol. Using alcohol as a stress reliever signals problem drinking, and it can do the opposite of relieving stress by numbing your emotions and decreasing your ability to cope with anxiety and stress."

**2. The “fun” factor.** "Do you have the most fun when you drink? Are you irritable or short-tempered when you don't drink? If you can't have fun unless consuming alcoholic beverages, you may have a problem."

**3. Frequent intoxication.** "For women, having three drinks on any day or seven per week signals heavy drinking (according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism). Social drinking in moderation is fine, but when you have reached the point of intoxication on frequent occasions, you are at great risk of developing alcoholism and other health problems."

**4. Being in denial.** "Many people who drink heavy amounts of alcohol cannot admit that they have a problem, especially when it comes to drinking in a social environment. Alcoholism is a subtle, progressive disease that can start out innocently with just a couple of drinks a few days out of the week to full out alcohol dependency. Denying your dependence on alcohol signals a huge problem, and it would benefit you to evaluate your drinking habits and reach out to an alcohol treatment therapist or facility to determine if you need help."

**Do you suspect that you have an alcohol dependency problem (no judging here!)? Or, do you know someone who does?**