



No single sign identifies a problem drinker, but a pattern of behaviors can indicate a problem:

- **Loss of Control** - attempts to cut down or control drinking fail. Repeated promises to "be more careful" or to "cut down on drinking." Gets drunk when intending to stay sober.
- **Black Outs** - unable to recall all or part of a drinking episode. Doesn't remember what was said or done when drunk (blacking out is different from passing out).
- **Increased Tolerance** - needs more alcohol than before to get the same effects. Tolerance increases after repeated high use drinking.
- **Drinking Causes Problems** - continues drinking even though it causes academic, legal, health, financial, or relationship problems.
- **Personality Changes When Drinking** - a normally nice person, becomes mean or abusive when drinking.
- **Neglects Responsibilities** - absent or late for classes, meetings, appointments, or work due to hangovers or intoxication.
- **Preoccupation with Drinking** - frequently thinks about drinking. Gives up activities that don't involve drinking. Avoids socializing with friends who don't drink.
- **Pre-Partying** - drinks alcohol before going to a party where alcohol will be served. Also, "chugs" drinks to get drunk as quickly as possible. May also sneak drinks so others don't know how much he/she is really drinking.
- **Denial and Minimizing** - claims not to drink excessively, despite evidence to the contrary. Minimizes the amount of drinking ("I only had a couple of drinks"). Avoids talking about his/her own drinking. Justifies drinking and tries to characterize it as normal, despite problems.
- **Susceptible to Accidents, Injuries, or Illnesses** - more likely to be hurt in falls, in fights, or by "bumping" into things.
- **Drinking to Feel Normal** - drinks to cope, to escape from problems, to solve a problem, or to feel like everyone else.
- **Drinking to Start the Day** - drinks when getting up in the morning to control tremors or shakes after drinking the night before.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>