



Information for older people on how to deal with alcohol and medication

Getting old addiction-free and staying healthy.

Are you worried about a loved one?

Detecting alcohol or medication dependency is not always easy. Many signs may be caused by too much alcohol or too many medications. There may also be other reasons.

People addicted to medicines can hardly imagine that their behaviour might have anything to do with addiction. After all, they are taking a medically prescribed drug.

Talk openly about your concerns!

Those affected are often grateful when they are confronted about a (suspected) substance abuse issue. Offer this person your support and assistance. Encourage affected people to contact a counselling centre or talk to a physician. Offer to accompany and support the person.

Sometimes older people need support from specialists who are qualified to advise them: in medical practices, pharmacies, offices for senior citizens or addiction counselling centres.

For more information on healthy ageing, alcohol and medicines as well as the 'Stay Strong' campaign, click here: www.starkbleiben.nrw.de

Contact

Antonia Zwiener
Project coordination 'Stay Strong'
Tel. +49 (0)208 30069-50
a.zwiener@ginko-stiftung.de
www.starkbleiben.nrw.de



AOK Rheinland/Hamburg, AOK NORDWEST, BARMER, BKK Landesverband NORDWEST, DAK Gesundheit, IKK classic, KNAPPSCHAFT, Sozialversicherung für Landwirtschaft, Forsten und Gartenbau als Landwirtschaftliche Krankenkasse (Social insurance for agriculture, forestry and horticulture as agricultural health insurance fund), Techniker Krankenkasse (Technician Health Insurance), Verband der Ersatzkassen e.V. NRW and the Medical Associations of North Rhine-Westphalia and Westphalia-Lippe, State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia



60+

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Stay Strong: New Tasks in Old Age

Older people no longer go to work and their children are grown up. A new stage in life begins. Look for new tasks or contacts, because routine daily structures and the feeling of being 'useful' are important.

Are there changes and situations that bother you? Then a conversation with a trusted person often helps. Many things become easier when you talk about them.

Some people think that alcohol or medication can help. But they cannot offer a solution in difficult life situations. Some people even become dependent on alcohol or medication as they get older. That causes even more of a health burden.

But there is always a way out.



Stay Strong: Dealing with Alcohol

People who drink a glass of alcohol in a social setting can continue to enjoy it in old age. But pay attention to the signs your body sends: Alcohol usually has a stronger effect in old age.

Recommendation

Healthy men should not drink more than two glasses of an alcoholic beverage per day. Healthy women should not drink more than one glass of alcohol a day, because alcohol has a stronger effect on them.

You should not drink alcohol at all on at least two days a week, so that your body does not get used to it.

If you need to take medication, you should stop taking alcohol altogether to avoid potential interactions.



Stay Strong: Dealing with Medications

Medicines are remedies for the treatment of diseases. However, a problem may arise if you are taking several different medications.

Effects and side effects

The older a person is and the more medication he or she takes, the more difficult it becomes for the body to handle it. Fluid deficiency also increases the harmful side effects of medication.

Sleeping pills and sedatives can become addictive after only a short time. If you notice any significant physical changes after taking medicine, you should seek professional advice.

Maintain a medication log. It will help your physician or health care professional identify any potential interactions.