

# The Effects of Addiction on the Body and Mind

Addiction comes in many forms and can affect anyone directly or indirectly. Everyone struggling with addiction suffers physically, mentally, and emotionally - and so do those close to them. It's a pervasive disease, and everyone is vulnerable, so education and vigilance are essential.

Whether it's yourself or someone else you're worried about, addiction affects all parts of the body *and* mind. This is why it's crucial to catch it early and get help, as many can't recover completely on their own. Read on to learn more about the physical and mental effects of addiction.

## Health Effects of Addiction

The mental and physical effects of addiction are unavoidable once the disease hits - regardless of the specific addiction you're suffering from. Many become addicted to various substances, some more serious than others. Some grow addicted to particular behaviours that offer a similar effect or emotional release as substances, such as gambling or shopping.

The symptoms, side effects, and health concerns vary from one addiction to another, but none are safe or free from consequences. For example, the physical health effects of addiction may be more prevalent with a substance abuse problem, while a behaviour addiction may produce more severe mental strain. Many things are dependent on the individual as well.

## Physical Effects of Addiction

All of that being said, there are many ways an addiction affects the body, both in the short term and long. For example, any drug, regardless of legality or strength, can impact your immune system. This alone leaves you more vulnerable to illness, infection, and disease.

Short-term physical effects of addiction can include:

- Nausea
- Abdominal pain
- Changes in appetite
- Weight loss or gain
- Increased strain on the liver
- Sleep problems
- And more

While many of these things are unpleasant and can have ripple effects, they are often fixable. Once you come off the substance, these things usually dissipate and stop causing problems. Some things, however, are permanent even once recovered.

Longer-term physical effects of addiction can include:

- Brain damage
- Liver failure
- Seizures
- Stroke
- Cardiovascular issues such as tuberculosis and pneumonia
- Gastrointestinal issues such as pancreatitis and malabsorption
- Kidney damage
- Neurological issues
- Heart problems such as heart disease, heart attacks, vascular disease
- Increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDs
- Chronic pain
- Coma
- Cancer - especially from alcohol. Cancer in the mouth, throat, liver, colon, larynx, esophagus, and breasts have all [been linked](#) to excessive alcohol consumption.
- Compromised brain health

These long-term health conditions can be devastating and life-changing, even once the addiction is overcome. Many can be managed with medication and other interventions, but your life will never be the same. Additionally, compromised brain health can lead to various mental and emotional struggles as well - which can also be both short and long-term.

### Mental Effects of Addiction:

Even if you don't suffer from severe health conditions as a result of drug or alcohol abuse, it can still damage your mental state. Similar to the physical effects of addiction, some are temporary and will go away.

For example, short-term mental effects of addiction can include:

- Excessive drug use alters the "reward" center of the brain, further contributing to the addictive cycle and increasing tolerance to the substance
- Mood swings
- Disruptive or irregular behavior
- Poor decision-making
- Memory problems
- Paranoia

These things tend to go away once you stop taking the drugs and/or quit the behavior(s). However, they can still leave lasting effects on your life - for example, making bad decisions or distancing friends/family while not in the right mindset.

Longer-term mental effects of addiction can include:

- Permanently impaired cognitive function. This can affect your capacity to learn, retain information, and make decisions. Depending on your level of substance abuse, these effects can linger beyond recovery or even become permanent.
- Mental illness. Substance abuse, especially, is heavily linked to mental illness. Excessive drug or alcohol consumption can trigger and/or worsen mental health conditions, most commonly depression and anxiety.

Many people struggle with addictions and mental illnesses simultaneously, therefore needing even more intense and comprehensive treatment. In these cases, it's best to attend therapy with a professional trained in co-occurring conditions who knows how to treat both things simultaneously.

## External Addiction Effects

Lastly, an addiction can affect your life beyond the physical and mental implications. Addiction can cause all kinds of irrational behavior and other disruptions in your life. Unfortunately, this often trickles into the lives of those around you. Even once you're fully recovered, these things can take time to repair, if they're even possible to fix at all.

Examples of how an addiction can affect your life and overall well-being include:

- Trouble meeting work deadlines and other obligations. Too many issues here can result in disciplinary action, including job loss.
- Strained social relationships. It's common to become distanced from close, cherished friends. Depending on the length and severity of the issues, these relationships may or may not be repairable.
- Family problems. Like friends, addiction can create strained family relationships. You can push your partner away and/or neglect and traumatize your kids. These things can be repaired, but trust takes a long time to rebuild and often requires therapy if others are willing to do so.
- Loss of motivation for hobbies and activities. You may find yourself uninterested in activities and hobbies you once loved. This can be due to mood changes and energy loss or because you're spending too much time using substances and being around others who use them.

Like anything else, these issues can either be repaired or become permanent. It all depends on the severity and the individuals involved. Regardless, there's no denying that addiction causes strain and friction for others beyond yourself.

## Heal Your Mind and Body with Lily Recovery

Addiction can hit anyone at any time. Most people don't see it coming, and it can have devastating effects on the lives of many. But - there's always hope! Regardless of your age, your circumstances, or the stage of your addiction, there is help and hope here at Lily Recovery.

Our quiet, women-only facility is perfect for recovery in peace and privacy. We employ numerous professionals who are well-versed in multiple forms of therapy to help you in every way you need. Don't hesitate to get in touch today with any questions or concerns or to discuss setting up a stay with us.