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What Are the Long Term Consequences of Chronic Alcoholism?

by Evolve Indy | Feb 24, 2023 | Alcohol Addiction, Educational Resource



Chronic alcoholism is a serious issue affecting millions of people worldwide. Many have this addiction but struggle to overcome it alone. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 3 million deaths each year are directly attributed to alcohol consumption, making it a leading cause of death and disability globally. Chronic alcoholism can have a profound impact on your physical health and mental health. It can also have other long-term effects. So, what are the long term consequences of chronic alcoholism? Below are a few.



Liver Damage

One of the most significant and well-known consequences of chronic alcoholism is liver damage. The liver is responsible for breaking down and processing alcohol, and over time, excessive consumption can scar and damage the liver, leading to a medical condition called cirrhosis. As cirrhosis progresses, the liver's ability to function properly is severely diminished, causing various health problems, including:

- jaundice
- fatigue abdominal pain
- Swelling

In advanced stages, cirrhosis may lead to total liver failure, which can be life-threatening.

In addition to cirrhosis, chronic alcoholism can also trigger other liver-related health problems, such as:

- fatty liver disease
- alcoholic hepatitis
- liver cancer

These conditions give rise to various symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and skin disorders. According to medical reports, it is difficult to determine the exact number of people who live with liver damage due to alcoholism. However, it is estimated that millions worldwide are affected by alcoholic liver disease, directly resulting from chronic excessive alcohol consumption.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 140 million people worldwide have alcohol use disorders. Of these, a significant proportion is likely to develop liver damage. Chronic alcoholism is a leading cause of liver disease and liver-related deaths, and alcoholic liver disease is increasing in many countries. As expected, alcohol-induced liver damage can be prevented through the reduction or cessation of alcohol consumption. More so, early medical intervention in the initial stages of the disease can make a difference.

Brain Damage

Another serious consequence of chronic alcoholism is brain damage. Alcohol is toxic to the brain; over time, excessive consumption can damage its structure and function. Chronic alcoholism often leads to a range of brain-related problems, including:

- memory loss
- difficulty thinking and concentrating
- impaired judgement and coordination changes in mood and behavior.

In addition to these cognitive and behavioral problems, chronic alcoholism is responsible for a range of neurological disorders, including Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome, a type of memory disorder caused by a deficiency of thiamine (vitamin B1). This syndrome can cause severe memory issues, confusion, and other cognitive and behavioral disorders. The effects of chronic alcoholism can be far-reaching and profoundly impact a person's health, well-being, and quality of life. It's prudent to seek help if you're facing challenges with this addiction, considering the dire consequences that could arise if you don't adopt helpful habits to manage your addiction. You will find it helpful to seek a private treatment center offering various treatment services. For example, opting for a partial hospitalization works well if you still want to go about your daily work routines. On the other hand, if your handlers believe your addiction requires an intensive-outpatient option, you may want to consider that too.

Cardiovascular Issues

Chronic alcoholism often has serious consequences for a person's cardiovascular health. Alcohol is a potent stimulant that can cause an increase in heart rate and blood pressure. The risks of an increased chance of developing heart disease and stroke are incredibly high. Chronic alcoholism also causes damage to the heart muscle, leading to a condition called alcoholic cardiomyopathy, which triggers heart failure.

In addition to these cardiovascular problems, chronic alcoholism tends to increase the risk of blood clots. In many cases, this has progressed into deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism. These conditions present serious symptoms like shortness of breath, chest pain, and difficulty breathing. If left unmanaged, irreversible heart problems set in, with an increased fatality rate. The sooner you seek help for this addiction, the better your chances of full recovery.

Conclusion

Although chronic alcoholism takes time to develop, it is undoubtedly a serious issue with farreaching consequences for a person's health and well-being. These include cardiovascular problems and brain and liver damage. Fortunately, there is help as long as you are willing to get back onto the road to recovery, so keep this in mind. Suppose you have parents or other loved ones struggling with chronic alcoholism. There is hope, as some centers offer tailored programs for such groups.

EVOLVE VINDY

Call us at: 1-855-495-1063

Evolve Indy is a Joint Commission Accredited, Premier Drug & Alcohol Treatment Facility in Indianapolis, Indiana Offering Evidence-Based Treatment for Substance Abuse.

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