

## Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## Creating awareness around addiction

There is no single cause of addiction. However, people can do a few small things to help prevent addiction in themselves and others. Even small actions can make a big difference.

National Addictions Awareness Week takes place Nov. 21 to 27. It is an opportunity to talk about what people can do to help prevent addiction.

Addiction is common, but can also be complicated to explain. It may be different for each person, depending on:

- The drug or behaviour involved
- The person's psychology, biology, and genes
- The person's past experiences
- The person's life situation
- How available the drugs are
- How socially acceptable the drug or behaviour is.

The following steps can help prevent addiction:

- Consider your choices. If you or someone you know seems to be using a drug more and more in certain situations, look for ways to avoid those situations.
- Be aware if there is a history of addiction in your family which helps you better understand your own personal risk factors.
- Learn how addictive any drugs are. This includes alcohol, caffeine, and prescription drugs.
- Some drugs are more addictive than others. Educate yourself on these differences and factors that could make them more addictive for you.



- Be aware of stress and how it can impact your consumption of substances. Try to address stress in other ways before it escalates. If someone is already having trouble controlling their behaviour or use of drugs, encourage them to seek help.

There are resources available to help individuals, families, schools and communities. Visit [www.ahs.ca/amh](http://www.ahs.ca/amh). These resources include information on what individuals can do for their mental well-being including self-care tips, which can reduce the chance of addiction occurring.

Some examples of positive self-care include:

- Asking for help
- Treating yourself with respect as you would treat a friend
- Going for a walk
- Practicing gratitude
- Laughing often
- Understanding your emotions
- Trying a new hobby.

If you or someone you know is struggling with an addiction, it is important to know that help is available. Albertans can get more information and help by calling Health Link at 811 or the Addiction Helpline at 1-866-332-2322.