Impact of Alcoholism on Children

Many of us are affected by alcoholism, but people with alcoholic parents especially need to understand the effects of alcohol dependence. Understanding how this disease has affected their upbringing can help many adult children of alcoholics gain control over their own lives.



- ∉# Guilt. The child may see him/herself as the main cause of the parent's drinking.

Resources

Al-Anon

1-888-4AL-ANON

www.al-anon.alateen.org

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Program

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724-357-1265

ATOD-OASIS@up.edu

www.iup.edu/atod

Counseling Center

G31 Suites on Maple East

724-357-2621

www.iup.edu/ counselingcenter

The Open Door Counseling & Crisis

The Atrium—2nd Floor

665 Philadelphia St.

Indiana, PA

724-465-4605

24/7 Crisis Intervention:

1-877-333-2470

www.theopendoor.org

Alcoholism in the **Family**



Are you at risk?

Brought to you by: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Program Indiana University of Pennsylvania

If you are among the millions of people in this country who have a parent, grandparent, or other close relative with alcoholism, you may have wondered what your family's history of alcoholism means for you.

Are problems with alcohol a part of your future? Is your risk for becoming an alcoholic greater than for people who do not have a family history of alcoholism? If so, what can you do to lower your risk?

Many scientific studies, including research conducted among twins and children of alcoholics, have shown that genetic facts influence alcoholism. These findings show that children of alcoholics are about four times more likely than the general population to develop alcohol problems. Children of alcoholics also have a higher risk for many other behavioral and emotional problems. But alcoholism is not determined only by the genes you inherit from your parents. In fact, more than one-half of all children of alcoholics do not become alcoholic. Research shows that many factors influence your risk of developing alcoholism. Some factors raise the risk while others lower it.

What is Alcoholism?

Alcoholism, or alcohol dependence, is a disease that includes four symptoms:

- Craving—A strong need or urge to drink
- Loss of control—not being able to stop drinking once drinking has begun
- Physical dependence—withdrawal symptoms, such as upset stomach, sweating, shakiness and anxiety after stopping drinking
- Tolerance—the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to get the same effect

If you are worried that your family's history of alcohol problems or your troubled family life puts you at risk for becoming an alcoholic, here is some advice to help you:

- Avoid underage drinking. First, underage drinking is illegal. Second, research shows that the risk for alcoholism is higher among people who begin to drink at an early age, perhaps as a result of both environmental and genetic factors.
- c# Drink moderately as an adult. Even if they do not have a family history of alcoholism, adults who choose to drink alcohol should do so in moderation. No more than one drink a day for most women and no more than two drinks a